

Community Issues Report

FIRST QUARTER 2011

Meredith Corporation
WHNS FOX Carolina

04/5/11

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COMMUNITY ISSUES

1/1/11 – 3/31/11

Consumer, Health & Safety

An interest in knowing about events that impact our daily lives. A need for information about how to be wise shoppers of goods and services and how to live healthy and safe lives.

Crime

A need to know about crime and law enforcement activities and a concern for personal safety.

Education

A concern about the money and skills needed to improve schools and an interest in improving student's quality of education.

Environment

A concern for how the environment is affected by human activity.

Government

An interest in how government affects our personal lives

Jobs/Economy/Growth

An interest in the local and national economic outlook and the impact growth has on our communities

Quality of Life

An interest in things that improve one's satisfaction with life.

The following pages list representative samples of program segments from The Ten O'clock Newscast, The News at 6:30 Newscast and The Morning Newscast during this quarter that respond to our ascertained issues. Each segment was 20 seconds to 3 minutes in length (except as otherwise reported).

The following pages also identify issue-responsive episodes of programs, which are listed under the appropriate issue.

WHNS also broadcasts public service announcements, news and weather cut-ins as needed to inform local community of breaking news and emergencies.

Attachments



Consumer, Health & Safety

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
FIRST QUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **CONSUMER, HEALTH & SAFETY**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
Saturdays (airs weekly)	6:30am	TODAY'S HOMEOWNER

Description: A half-hour weekly television show that features information on how to maintain and improve your home, both inside and out. The approach to home improvement helps everyone from the experienced do-it-yourselfer to the first time homeowner. Projects are taken from start to finish in each weekly episode. (30:00)

January 4, 2011

Taxpayers will get an extra three days to file their federal tax returns this year, and they can thank the nation's [capital](#) for the extra time. The filing deadline is delayed because the District of Columbia will observe Emancipation Day on Friday, April 15. The Internal Revenue Service says local holidays in the nation's capital impact tax deadlines the same way federal holidays would. Taxpayers will have until midnight Monday, April 18, to file their 2010 returns. Emancipation Day marks the occasion when President Abraham Lincoln signed into law a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia. Lincoln signed the bill on April 16, 1862, more than eight months before he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which eventually led to all slaves being freed.

January 7, 2011

Fluoride in drinking water - credited with dramatically cutting cavities and tooth decay - may now be too much of a good thing. Getting too much of it causes spots on some kids' teeth. A reported increase in the spotting problem is one reason the federal government said Friday it plans to lower the recommended levels for fluoride in water supplies - the first such change in nearly 50 years. About 2 out of 5 adolescents have tooth streaking or spottiness because of too much fluoride, a surprising government study found recently. In some extreme cases, teeth can even be pitted by the mineral - though many cases are so mild only dentists notice it. The problem is generally considered cosmetic. Health officials note that most communities have fluoride in their water supplies, and toothpaste has it too. Some kids are even given fluoride supplements. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is proposing changing the recommended fluoride level to 0.7 milligrams per liter of water. And the Environmental Protection Agency will review whether the maximum cutoff of 4 milligrams per liter is too high. The standard since 1962 has been a range of 0.7 to 1.2 milligrams per liter. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the splotchy tooth condition, fluorosis, is unexpectedly common in kids ages 12 through 15. And it appears to have grown much more common since the 1980s. "One of the things that we're most concerned about is exactly that," said an administration official who was not authorized to speak publicly before the release of the report. The official described the government's plans in an interview with The Associated Press. But there are other concerns, too. A scientific report five years ago said that people who consume a lifetime of too much fluoride - an amount over EPA's limit of 4 milligrams - can lead to crippling bone abnormalities and brittleness. That and other research issued Friday by the EPA about health effects of fluoride are sure to re-energize groups that still oppose adding it to water supplies. The American Dental Association released a statement applauding the government announcement to change fluoride guidance. Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in water and soil. About 70 years ago, scientists discovered that people whose supplies naturally had more fluoride also had fewer cavities. Some locales have naturally occurring fluoridation levels above 1.2. Today, most public drinking water is fluoridated, especially in larger cities. An estimated 64 percent of Americans drink fluoridated water. Portland, Ore., is one of the largest cities that doesn't fluoridate its water. Bill Zepp of the Oregon Dental Association said the city's anti-fluoridation activists will embrace the recommended fluoride changes "as some type of win." Maryland is the most fluoridated state, with nearly every resident on a fluoridated system. In contrast, only about 11 percent of Hawaii residents are on fluoridated water, according to government statistics. Fluoridation has been fought for decades by people who worried about its effects, including conspiracy theorists who feared it was a plot to make people submissive to government power. Those battles continue. "It's amazing that people have been so convinced that this is an OK thing to do," said Deborah Catrow said Friday. She successfully fought a ballot proposal in 2005 that would have added fluoride to drinking water in Springfield, Ohio. Reducing fluoride would be a good start, but she

hopes it will be eliminated altogether from municipal water supplies. Catrow said it was hard standing up to City Hall, the American Dental Association and the state health department. "Anybody who was anti-fluoride was considered crazy at the time," she said. In New York, the village of Cobleskill in Schoharie County - west of Albany - stopped adding fluoride to its drinking water in 2007 after the longtime water superintendent became convinced the additive was contributing to his knee problems. Two years later, the village reversed the move after dentists and doctors complained. In March, 2006, the National Academy of Sciences released a report recommending that the EPA lower its maximum standard for fluoride in drinking water to below 4 milligrams. The report warned severe fluorosis could occur at 2 milligrams. Also, a majority of the report's authors said a lifetime of drinking water with fluoride at 4 milligrams or higher could raise the risk of broken bones. Late last year, lawyers for the Fluoride Action Network, Beyond Pesticides, and Environmental Working Group threatened legal action if the EPA did not lower its ceiling on fluoride. In Europe, fluoride is rarely added to water supplies. In Britain, only about 10 percent of the population has fluoridated water. It's been a controversial issue there, with critics arguing people shouldn't be forced to have "medical treatment" forced on them. In recent years, the UK has tried to add fluoride to communities with the worst dental health but there's still considerable opposition. In the early years of fluoridation in the United States, the range of levels was created because people in warmer climates drank more water, therefore getting more fluoride than cooler regions. Over time, that difference leveled out with air conditioning, the senior administration official said. Fluorosis has generally been seen as the primary down side of fluoride. According to the CDC, nearly 23 percent of children ages 12-15 had fluorosis in a study done in 1986 and 1987. That rose to 41 percent in the more recent study, which covered the years 1999 through 2004. "We're not necessarily surprised to see this slow rise in mild fluorosis," Dr. William Kohn, director of the CDC's division of oral health, said in a recent interview. Health officials have hesitated to call it a problem, however. In most kids, it's barely noticeable; even dentists have trouble seeing it, and sometimes don't bother to tell their unknowing patients. Meanwhile, the U.S. prevalence of tooth decay in at least one tooth among teens has declined from about 90 percent to 60 percent. Health officials call water fluoridation one of the 10 greatest public health accomplishments of the last century. "One of water fluoridation's biggest advantages is that it benefits all residents of a community - at home, work, school, or play. And fluoridation's effectiveness in preventing tooth decay is not limited to children, but extends throughout life, resulting in improved oral health," said HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Dr. Howard Koh, in a statement. Indeed, many health leaders continue to be worried about cavities, particularly among poor families with kids who eat a lot of sweets but don't get much dental care. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius could make a final decision on details of the changes within a few months, the administration official said.

January 7, 2011

A silent helicopter pilot prompted the scrambling of fighter jets along the South Carolina coast Thursday morning, the North American Aerospace Defense Command said. NORAD said that the pilot entered North American airspace near Charleston and was not communicating with air traffic controllers. Two F-16 fighter jets from the 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw Air Force Base were sent to intercept the helicopter, NORAD said. Officials said that the fighter pilots used hand signals to direct the pilot to establish communication. NORAD said after communication was established, the jets returned to base.

January 8, 2011

People in the Upstate have been out all weekend, stocking up on boots, coats and scarves to stay warm. The Mast General Store in downtown said that Saturday and Sunday almost felt like the Christmas shopping season. Workers said they ran out of sleds and different kinds of boots. They said down coats, stocking caps and waterproof gloves were popular items. They said they often get a lot of out-of-town visitors shopping at their store, and that it is a good thing they planned for a recession recovery. "We had extra stock this year, so it's kind of going to work out in our favor this year," said David Vinson, an employee. "We sold a lot of stuff before Christmas, but we still have a lot of coats and jackets for sale, so it worked out good for us." Some shoppers said they wanted to be ready to enjoy the snow Monday.

January 9, 2011

When snow hits the Upstate, much of the region shuts down, but for some they must get to work on time, because people depend on them. Hospitals are open around the clock, and the nurses and orderlies need to be there to take care of people who are injured during the storm. St. Francis Hospital in downtown Greenville spread salt on the sidewalks and entryways Sunday afternoon. Supervisors said they told staff who work from 7 p.m. Sunday to bring extra clothes in case they can't get home, and need to stay until their next shift. The hospital set up space for nurses who would typically come in at 7 a.m. to sleep overnight, in case they wanted to come in early to make their shift on time. Supervisors arranged car-pools so that people with [four-wheel drive](#) could pick up others who don't have the feature. "Neighbors of nurses will bring a nurse into work, if need be," said St.

Francis registered nurse Kyle Merck. "They know how important it is for us to be here. Because you never know when something's going to happen, especially in the emergency room. You never know when you'll have an emergency and we need to be here for them." Hospital staff said emergency services and ambulances are also running on snow days. Merck said snowy weather does not mean fewer or more visits to the emergency room, but they are often from crashes, snow shoveling or slipping on ice. He said workers see a lot of broken bones during a winter storm.

January 10, 2011

All this cold weather is causing heating bills in the Upstate to be higher than usual. It's tough on many people's pockets, but it's good for those making money off the sales. Keith's Fuel Oil Company delivers home heating oil. Owner Keith Crymes said Saturdays are typically laid back, but not so this weekend. "They call us, they say, 'Well it's going to be cold. We better have extra oil in the tank for this coming up week,'" said Crymes. "So a lot of them went ahead and ordered a little bit early on account of the storm or blizzard that we got coming." Crymes acknowledged that the oil heating business is diminishing, but customers remain loyal. He said this season, he's been making deliveries more often than in years past. "They want less at a time," said Crymes. "Customers were buying 100 gallons at a time, and now they're down to 50 at a time." Joeann Sims, one customer, said since the winter has been colder and the cost of fuel has gone up, she's buying more oil. "I have been here 30 something years," Sims said. "This is the worst I have ever seen the oil. I normally use around 250 gallons the whole winter, and I've already purchased 200 gallons." Crymes said since September he has had to raise his prices about 65 cents per gallon. He said he expects prices to continue to rise. He said even if one does not buy oil, heating is expensive. "If you don't pay the oil man, you'll pay Duke [Power](#) or the gas company," Crymes said. "It's going to go to one way or the other." There are local heating assistance programs available for people who might need help paying their bills, like SHARE in Greenville and through some local churches. Crymes said anonymous donations have been made to help offset costs for people who cannot make their payments.

January 13, 2011

Trash and recycling service in Greenville will be delayed until Tuesday because of icy roads and a holiday. City offices reopened on Thursday after being closed for a few days because of the snow. Officials said that solid waste service will continue to be one day late after it resumes on Tuesday. Crews asked residents to bag any additional trash and place it next to their can if their cans are full.

January 13, 2011

Three days after a winter storm blanketed the Upstate in snow and ice, crews are still working to clear the roads. Nearly all of the area's interstates have been cleared, prompting state plow crews to begin working on high-volume primary roads. It is up to county and city plow crews to take care of most of the secondary roads. Wednesday was the first day since the storm that the sun was able to help plow crews out by melting some of the snow and ice, but the bitter cold overnight caused the melted precipitation to refreeze, creating more icy patches. Some drivers said they are beginning to get frustrated with road conditions. "It's a lot worse up here," said Josh Shetler, who lives in Travelers Rest. "It's just solid ice. Luckily, people have been driving slow. A lot of people we've seen a lot of [vehicles](#) that have slid off the road with front-wheel drive and rear-wheel drive. If you've got two-wheel drive, I wouldn't even try." Bob Mihalic, spokesman for Greenville County, said crews are working 12-hour shifts to clear the county's 1,600 roads. "We won't stop until everything's dried up and we're convinced that every road is passable and safe," Mihalic said. Mihalic referenced a nearly 7-foot-tall pile of snow at County Square that came from the parking lot that was cleared by plow crews. "That's one section of a parking lot, now imagine that on all the roads out there," Mihalic said. "That's how much work has been done over the past 72 hours." Drivers like Cody Wooten, of Marietta, said they will just have to take it slow. "(The tires) do what they want to do," Wooten said. "They just want to slide out from under you. So you've got to be careful and now slam on the brakes like I just did." Because of the icy roads, students in several counties got another day off from school Thursday.

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January 13, 2011

The American Red Cross is seeking blood donations, saying the fierce winter storm caused the cancellation of hundreds of blood drives along the East Coast. Red Cross regions in the southeast reported that more than 6,000 blood donations could not be collected. In the northeast, Red Cross regions had lost more than 2,200 blood donations. Donna Morrissey, a spokeswoman for American Red Cross Blood Services in the northeast, asked eligible blood donors to make an appointment to donate blood. Atlanta has been struggling to recover four days after it got its share of the storm, which moved up north and dumped two feet or more in areas of New England.

January 14, 2011

Monday's winter storm has caused an increase in insurance claims, agents said Thursday. From [cars](#) sliding on icy streets, to homes suffering water damage from mounds of snow and ice, insurance agents said protecting your property with a good policy is key. Agents also warn that if snow and ice that has accumulated on a [vehicle](#) flies off, drivers can be liable if it causes damage to another car. They said drivers should make sure all the snow has been swept off their vehicles before they hit the roads. For homeowners, mounds of snow and ice on the roof can lead to water leaking into your home, agents said. They said with all the melting and refreezing, ice damming can occur. Insurance agents said having a solid insurance policy can prevent you from being blindsided during the next storm.

January 25, 2011

The U.S. spends more on health care than any other nation yet has worse [life expectancy](#) than many - and a new report blames smoking and obesity. That may sound surprising, considering that public smoking is being stamped out here while it's common in parts of Europe. And obesity is a growing problem around the world. But the U.S. led those unhealthy trends, lighting up and fattening up a few decades ahead of other high-income countries. And the long-term consequences are life expectancy a few years shorter than parts of Europe and Japan, the National Research Council reported Tuesday. In the U.S., life expectancy at birth was 80.8 years for women and 75.6 years for men in 2007. In France, life expectancy for women was 84.4 years and 77.4 for men. And in Japan, it was nearly 86 years for women and 79.2 for men. But thanks to the decline in smoking over the last 20 years, the life expectancy of U.S. men is expected to rapidly improve in coming decades. That improvement will be a little slower for U.S. women, whose peak [smoking rates](#) occurred several years after men's. In countries where women's life expectancies are particularly high, women never smoked as much as men, said gerontologist Eileen Crimmins of the University of Southern California, who co-chaired the report. But in some Northern European countries, women's smoking was more similar to Americans' and life expectancy is too. While smoking is the key factor, the report also said obesity may account for a fifth to a third of the U.S. shortfall in life expectancy. It's hard to predict if that impact will continue, Crimmins said. Treatments may allow people to survive obesity's damage for longer, although specialists are particularly concerned about the lifespan of children who live all their lives obese rather than getting fat after they're grown. As for all those health care bills, "it's not enough to trump a lot of our behaviors," Crimmins said. The council is part of the National Academy of Sciences, an independent organization chartered by Congress to advise the government on scientific matters.

January 28, 2011

Flu is widespread in South Carolina, the state Health Department said Thursday. The Department of Health and Environmental Control said since October there have been 7,654 positive rapid flu tests from health care providers and 102 lab-confirmed cases. The department said 234 people have been hospitalized because of influenza and eight people have died from the illness. Dr. Jerry Gibson, director of DHEC's Bureau of Disease Control, said this year's flu season appears to be more typical than the H1N1 virus that was seen during the 2009 and 2010 seasons. "Many people don't realize that the flu causes mild to severe respiratory illness and can be deadly," Gibson said. "We strongly encourage anyone 6 months or older to be vaccinated." DHEC said the flu vaccine is available in either shot or nasal spray form from private providers and public health departments. "If you get your vaccine, it'll help protect you," said Susan Boeker, a private health care provider. "If you haven't gotten it, please go ahead and get it." "Vaccination is especially important for the very young, the elderly and chronic health conditions that might put them at higher risk of serious illness," Gibson said. "Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your family." DHEC said South Carolina's flu season typically peaks in February.

March 8, 2011

Three children who were walking to school were hit by a car Monday morning, Spartanburg police said. The crash happened near the intersection of South Pine Lake and Limestone drives at 7:06 a.m. Police said that Doris Philson, 41, was driving east

on South Pine Lake Drive when she veered off the right side of the road and hit the children, who were either 10 or 11 years old. Philson told police she still had frost on her windshield and did not see the three children. The children were taken to Spartanburg Regional Medical Center and treated for non-life-threatening injuries, police said. Police said Philson was ticketed for driving without a South Carolina driver's license in possession and driving too fast for conditions. The children were not identified.

March 14, 2011

The Greenwood City Council discussed the possibility of banning smoking in public places during a meeting Monday night. Mayor Welborn Adams and the City Council listened to public comments on the ordinance they have been considering for a little over a year. Business owners and residents had mixed opinions about the proposal to ban smoking in restaurants, bars and workplaces. "I'm not a smoker," said Alan Boatwright, a business owner. "I don't think it's the time or place for the government to step in and tell local business owners how they should run their business." "Going through the restaurants and bars there, where it seems like everything is fine," said business owner Kevin Prater, talking about his experience in Greenville, where smoking is banned. "You can go in and out of different bars and never smell smoke." Adams said the next step is for the City Council to draw up a resolution and possibly put it to a vote next month.

March 15, 2011

Dangerous levels of radiation leaking from a crippled nuclear plant forced Japan to order 140,000 people to seal themselves indoors Tuesday after an explosion and a fire dramatically escalated the crisis spawned by a deadly tsunami. In a nationally televised statement, Prime Minister Naoto Kan said radiation had spread from the four stricken reactors of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant along Japan's northeastern coast. The region was shattered by Friday's 9.0-magnitude earthquake and the ensuing tsunami that is believed to have killed more than 10,000 people, plunged millions into misery and pummeled the world's third-largest economy. Japanese officials told the International Atomic Energy Agency that the reactor fire was in a fuel storage pond - an area where used nuclear fuel is kept cool - and that "radioactivity is being released directly into the atmosphere." Long after the fire was extinguished, a Japanese official said the pool might still be boiling, though the reported levels of radiation had dropped dramatically by the end of the day. Late Tuesday, officials at the plant said they were considering asking for help from the U.S. and Japanese militaries to spray water from helicopters into the pool. That reactor, Unit 4, had been shut down before the quake for maintenance. If the water boils, it could evaporate, exposing the rods. The fuel rods are encased in safety containers meant to prevent them from resuming nuclear reactions, nuclear officials said. But they acknowledged that there could have been damage to the containers. They also confirmed that the walls of the storage pool building were damaged. Experts noted that much of the leaking radiation was apparently in steam from boiling water. It had not been emitted directly by fuel rods, which would be far more virulent, they said. "It's not good, but I don't think it's a disaster," said Steve Crossley, an Australia-based radiation physicist. Even the highest detected rates were not automatically harmful for brief periods, he said. "If you were to spend a significant amount of time - in the order of hours - that could be significant," Crossley said. Less clear were the results of the blast in Unit 2, near a suppression pool, which removes heat under a reactor vessel, said plant owner Tokyo Electric Power Co. The nuclear core was not damaged but the bottom of the surrounding container may have been, said Shigekazu Omukai, a spokesman for Japan's nuclear safety agency. Though Kan and other officials urged calm, Tuesday's developments fueled a growing panic in Japan and around the world amid widespread uncertainty over what would happen next. In the worst case scenario, one or more of the reactor cores would completely melt down, a disaster that could spew large amounts of radioactivity into the atmosphere. "I worry a lot about fallout," said Yuta Tadano, a 20-year-old pump technician at the Fukushima plant, who said he was in the complex when the quake hit. "If we could see it, we could escape, but we can't," he said, cradling his 4-month-old baby, Shoma, at an evacuation center. The radiation fears added to the catastrophe that has been unfolding in Japan, where at least 10,000 people are believed to have been killed and millions of people were facing a fifth night with little food, water or heating in near-freezing temperatures and snow as they dealt with the loss of homes and loved ones. Up to 450,000 people are in temporary shelters. Hundreds of aftershocks have shaken Japan's northeast and Tokyo since the original offshore quake, including one Tuesday night whose epicenter was hundreds of miles (kilometers) southwest and inland. Officials have only been able to confirm a far lower toll - about 3,300 killed - but those who were involved in the 2004 Asian tsunami said there was no question more people died and warned that, like the earlier disaster, many thousands may never be found. Asia's richest country hasn't seen such hardship since World War II. The stock market plunged for a second day and a spate of panic buying saw stores running out of necessities, raising government fears that hoarding may hurt the delivery of emergency food aid to those who really need it. In a rare bit of good news, rescuers found two survivors Tuesday in the rubble left by the tsunami that hit the northeast, including a 70-year-old woman whose house was tossed off its foundation. The Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear complex, along that battered coastline, has been the focus of the worries. Workers there have been desperately trying to use seawater to cool the fuel rods in

the complex's three reactors, all of which lost their cooling ability after Friday's quake and tsunami. On Tuesday, the complex was hit by its third explosion since Friday, and then a fire in a separate reactor. Afterward, officials in Ibaraki, a neighboring prefecture just south of the area, said up to 100 times the normal levels of radiation were detected Tuesday. While those figures are worrying if there is prolonged exposure, they are far from fatal. Tokyo reported slightly elevated radiation levels, but officials said the increase was too small to threaten the 39 million people in and around the capital, about 170 miles (270 kilometers) away. Amid concerns about radiation, Austria moved its embassy from Tokyo to Osaka. Meanwhile, Air China and China Eastern Airlines canceled flights to Tokyo and two cities in the disaster area. Germany's Lufthansa airlines is also diverting its two daily flights to Tokyo to other Japanese cities. None mentioned radiation concerns, instead giving no explanation or citing the airports' limited capacities. Closer to the stricken nuclear complex, the streets in the coastal city of Soma were empty as the few residents who remained there heeded the government's warning to stay indoors. Kan and other officials warned there is a danger of more leaks and told people living within 19 miles (30 kilometers) of the Fukushima Dai-ichi complex to stay indoors to avoid exposure that could make people sick. "Please do not go outside. Please stay indoors. Please close windows and make your homes airtight," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano told residents in the danger zone. "These are figures that potentially affect health. There is no mistake about that," he said. Weather forecasts for Fukushima were for snow and wind Tuesday evening, blowing southwest toward Tokyo, then shifting and blowing east out to sea. That's important because it shows which direction a possible nuclear cloud might blow. Some 70,000 people had already been evacuated from a 12-mile (20-kilometer) radius from the Dai-ichi complex. About 140,000 remain in the new danger zone. Officials said 70 workers were at the complex, struggling with its myriad problems. The workers, all of them wearing protective gear, are being rotated in and out of the danger zone quickly to reduce their radiation exposure. Another 800 staff were evacuated. The fires and explosions at the reactors have injured 15 workers and military personnel and exposed up to 190 people to elevated radiation. Temperatures in at least two of the complex's reactors, units 5 and 6, were also slightly elevated, Edano said. "The power for cooling is not working well and the temperature is gradually rising, so it is necessary to control it," he said. Fourteen pumps have been brought in to get seawater into the other reactors. They are not yet pumping water into Unit 4 but are trying to figure out how to do that. In Tokyo, slightly higher-than-normal radiation levels were detected Tuesday but officials insisted there are no health dangers. "The amount is extremely small, and it does not raise health concerns. It will not affect us," Takayuki Fujiki, a Tokyo government official said. Edano said the radiation readings had fallen significantly by the evening. Japanese government officials are being rightly cautious, said Donald Olander, professor emeritus of nuclear engineering at University of California at Berkeley. He believed even the heavily elevated levels of radiation around Dai-ichi are "not a health hazard." But without knowing specific dose levels, he said it was hard to make judgments. "Right now it's worse than Three Mile Island," Olander said. But it's nowhere near the levels released during Chernobyl. On Three Mile Island, the radiation leak was held inside the containment shell - thick concrete armor around the reactor. The Chernobyl reactor had no shell and was also operational when the disaster struck. The Japanese reactors automatically shut down when the quake hit and are encased in containment shells. The impact of the earthquake and tsunami dragged down stock markets. The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average plunged for a second day Tuesday, nose-diving more than 10 percent to close at 8,605.15 while the broader Topix lost more than 8 percent. To lessen the damage, Japan's central bank made two cash injections totaling 8 trillion yen (\$98 billion) Tuesday into the money markets after pumping in \$184 billion on Monday. Initial estimates put repair costs in the tens of billions of dollars, costs that would likely add to a massive public debt that, at 200 percent of gross domestic product, is the biggest among industrialized nations. The Dai-ichi plant is the most severely affected of three nuclear complexes that were declared emergencies after suffering damage in Friday's quake and tsunami, raising questions about the safety of such plants in coastal areas near fault lines and adding to global jitters over the industry

March 16, 2011

Concern is mounting about potential health risks of radiation from the crippled nuclear reactors in Japan. How much radiation you get depends on the dose, duration and method of exposure. Some types of radioactive particles are more dangerous or longer lasting than others.

Some basics:

Q. How are people exposed to radiation?

A. Radioactive particles in fallout can be inhaled into the lungs, fall on the skin or be ingested through contaminated food or water. The level can vary greatly even between short distances, said Dr. Fred Mettler, a University of New Mexico radiologist who led an international study of health effects after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

"You can come around a corner and the dose rate can be very high, and you get back behind a column and the dose rate is much lower," depending on what type of particles are in the fallout, whether you're standing under a roof where they've accumulated or shielded you from them, etc., he said.

Q. How does radiation harm?

A. In the short term, radiation damages rapidly dividing cells - hair, the stomach lining, bone marrow. That can cause nausea, vomiting, fatigue, loss of infection-fighting blood cells and clotting problems. Children are most at risk because they have so many rapidly dividing cells.

One type of radiation, radioactive iodine, is taken up by the thyroid gland and can lead to thyroid cancer if pills are not taken right away to prevent this uptake. Long term, radiation can damage DNA and raise the risk of many types of cancer years down the road.

Q. How much radiation is unsafe?

A. Most people get around three-tenths of a rem (a measurement unit of dose) each year from radiation in the environment, mostly from radon gas in the soil. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission says doses of less than 10 rems over a long time period are not a health concern.

Q. When does it threaten health?

A. Symptoms of radiation sickness - nausea, vomiting and hair loss - can occur at exposures of 50 to 100 rems, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Death within two months becomes a possible risk at around 400 rems; within two weeks at 1,000 rems, the EPA says.

Q. What about medical radiation?

A. A chest X-ray delivers about one-tenth of a rem of radiation; a CT scan of the abdomen and pelvis is 1.4 rems. A person's dose accumulates over time, which is why medical experts say we should avoid unnecessary tests that involve radiation.

Q. What's the antidote once there is radioactive fallout?

A. Potassium iodide pills can block uptake of radioactive iodine and protect the thyroid gland, but they must be used quickly. "Ideally, you'd give it before they're exposed or at the time" of exposure, Mettler said. "After 12 hours, it's hardly useful" unless exposure is continuing.

Q. If fallout is occurring, should people flee or stay?

A. Each situation is different and can change rapidly. Japanese officials urged tens of thousands of people to evacuate from a 12-mile zone, but now have told many more in a broader region, about 20 miles from the troubled plant, to seal themselves indoors.

Q. Is this like Chernobyl?

A. No. That Russian plant had no containment vessel around its reactor, so when an explosion occurred, large chunks of radioactive fuel from the core spewed out. That fuel contained cesium, a longer-lasting and more hazardous radioactive material than the shorter-lived radioactive iodine that has mostly been released in Japan. Still, there have been reports of some cesium release in Japan, prompting worries that a meltdown may be occurring.

March 15, 2011

The Greenville metro area had the largest rent increase nationwide in 2010, according to a report in Bloomberg Businessweek. Dallas-based apartment market research firm AXIOMetrics was cited in the report, saying that 2010 was one of the best periods for landlords over the past 15 years. Businessweek said that in 2009, landlords offered more discounts to help keep existing tenants and attract new ones. The report said there are more renters than ever now because people have lost their homes or are putting off buying one.

The article said that effective rents, which include concessions, increased 11.2 percent in the Greenville area to \$669. It said vacancies fell to 7.7 percent in 2010, compared to 9.5 percent in 2009. Rents were also up nationwide an average of 4.2 percent, well below the Greenville average increase, Businessweek said. The business website said AXIOMetrics expects the rates to continue their upward trend through 2011, before slowing in 2012. AXIOMetrics President Ronald Johnsey told Businessweek he recommends renters sign as long a lease as possible to lock in current rates.

March 21, 2011

Vision Airlines is offering \$19 introductory fares this week ahead of its first flight out of the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport on Friday. In January, the airline announced that it would begin service from GSP to the Northwest Florida Regional Airport, which serves locations like Destin, Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa Island. To celebrate the new service, Vision is offering \$19 one-way, introductory fares between Monday and Thursday for flights through May 21, 2011. On Friday, the fares increase to \$89 each way. "We believe this new service will be well received and very successful as the state of Florida is a popular destination for Upstate travelers," said GSP Executive Director Dave Edwards. The airlines said it

will use a 18-seat Boeing 737 aircraft for its flights out of GSP. Vision is also set to begin service to Asheville, N.C., and Columbia in April.

March 22, 2011

The public has been warned to avoid contact with water in Long Branch Creek in Berea after a sanitary sewer overflow, state officials said. Wastewater entered a dry creek bed that feeds the creek near the intersection of Avon Street and Larkspur Drive, the state Department of Health and Environmental Control said. Berea fire and sewer officials responded to the spill and have started a cleanup. DHEC has posted warning signs along the affected area. They will stay up until water quality improves. Officials said residents should avoid contact with waters around and downstream of the overflow. Pets should also be kept away, they said.

March 22, 2011

South Carolina's financial oversight board has approved a \$100 million bailout for the state's Medicaid program. The Budget and Control Board agreed Tuesday to allow state surpluses or reserves to cover the Department of Health and Human Services shortfall. State Treasurer Curtis Loftis objected to the move, saying the bailout and the \$100 million approved last month amount to increasing the budget of the agency and that is something only the Legislature should do. Loftis lost the vote 4-1. The Department of Health and Human Services said last month's bailout only gave it enough cash to pay doctors, hospitals and nursing homes through May 13. Officials told the board the agency still needs \$25 million to cover its deficit.

March 28, 2011

Troopers said a car headed the wrong way on Interstate 85 caused a fiery crash that blocked the highway for more than six hours. The crash happened about 3 a.m. on I-85 northbound at Mauldin Road. Troopers said the driver of a car was headed southbound on the northbound side of the interstate when it collided with a FedEx Ground tractor-trailer headed northbound. The crash caused a fire that consumed the trailers of the truck. "I was here when the first fire truck arrived, and I saw flames as high as the bridge," said Tim Evans, who witnessed the crash. "Smoke everywhere. You could see the car a little bit, but there's nothing anyone could do at that time." Troopers said the driver of the car was trapped in the vehicle after the crash and was not wearing a seat belt. They said the driver of the tractor-trailer was not injured, but his passenger was taken to Greenville Memorial Hospital and treated for his injuries. The Greenville County Coroner's Office said the driver of the car was killed, but his or her identity was not immediately released. The interstate reopened about six hours later.

March 29, 2011

A family on board the miniature train that derailed in Cleveland Park on March 19 said Monday that their medical bills are piling up. Benji Easler, 6, of Gaffney, died when the train left its tracks. His father, Dwight Easler, and mother, Tabitha, and his two brothers were among the 27 people injured in the crash. Also on the train was Stephanie Rackley and her family. They are suing the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Spartanburg County and the Spartanburg Parks Commission. Rackley, visibly wounded, met with state lawmakers Monday to discuss how they could pay for the family's bills. "Millions of thoughts run through my head," Rackley said. "The last thing we should worry about is how we should pay bills." State Reps. Doug Brannon and Dennis Moss said they want to help the family figure out what they can do, within the law, to help cover the costs. Cherokee Avenue Baptist Church in Gaffney also said Monday it will hold a remembrance service at 6 p.m. Thursday to pray for the victims of the crash. The conductor of the train, Matt Conrad, originally told police that he knew he was going too fast, according to an incident report. Conrad has said he was in shock when he made that statement and believes a mechanical failure caused the crash.

March 30, 2011

South Carolina health officials have told a grocery store in Richland County not to stock raccoon meat. The State newspaper reported the Department of Health and Environmental Control found bags of chilled raccoon meat in a cooler at the store in Gadsden. DHEC spokesman Thom Berry said he cannot recall when inspectors have found raccoon meat in a grocery store. Berry said raccoon meat is not certified by state and federal meat inspectors as being safe for humans. Berry said inspectors found the meat still in the store on a second visit and ordered it thrown away. Berry said DHEC is considering taking action against the store. A clerk who answered the phone at the Lucky Seven No. 2 store said she could not talk about the matter.

March 30, 2011

Startling differences in the health of residents living just a few miles apart are highlighted in a new health rankings report that assesses wellness in nearly all the nation's 3,000-plus counties. A typical example is in Illinois, where the healthiest of its 102 counties, Kendall, is right next door to the one ranked 65th, LaSalle. Twice as many LaSalle County residents are in poor or fair health and smoking rates are double the national average. Suburban versus rural and proximity to big cities and high-paying jobs partly explain the disparities. Kendall County is on the edge of Chicago's metropolitan area, while LaSalle County is more farming-based. "Affluent suburbs tend to have higher paying jobs, often in the cities, whereas rural communities often are dealing with loss of businesses" and declining populations of young people, who tend to be healthier, said Dr. Patrick Remington, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute. The institute produced the rankings with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and their second annual rankings report was being released online Wednesday.

Residents of rural communities also tend to have less education, less access to health care, and higher rates of substance abuse and smoking - all factors that contribute to the rankings. Still, counties encompassing big cities aren't immune. Wyandotte County, Kansas learned that when the researchers released their widely publicized first county health rankings report last year. The county includes Kansas City and boasts two major medical centers, which officials figured would mean a top ranking. But Joe Reardon, mayor and CEO of Kansas City and county government, said the county's listing - 96th out of 98 in Kansas - was a wake-up call. It prompted several meetings with county authorities, local institutions and citizens, resulting in plans for more urban grocery stores and public works projects that aim to make sidewalks and roadways safer and more usable for pedestrians and bicyclists. The rankings compare counties within each state. They're based on data from vital statistics and government health surveys. In many cases, several years of data are used to calculate rankings, Remington said. For that reason, many rankings this year are similar to those from the 2010 report. Premature deaths - people dying before age 75 of preventable diseases; self-reported health status; and the percent of low birth-weight babies contribute to the rankings. Other measures include obesity rates, unemployment, high school graduation rates and pollution. Richard Sewell, a health policy specialist at the University of Illinois at Chicago, praised the report for including a wide array of important measures that affect health. "It's a call to action" that leaders beyond the medical realm pay attention to, Sewell said. James Marks, director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's health group, said last year's report resulted in an impressive amount of action in many counties that fared poorly. With annual rankings planned in the future, he said the reports likely will spur real improvement in Americans' health. Already, prompted by last year's report:

- Jason Cook, an outreach pastor at Center Point United Baptist Church in Lincoln County, W.Va., started a wellness program to encourage parishioners to become more active, eat more healthy foods and lose weight. Overall, 18 people signed up and have lost nearly 250 pounds since January, Cook said.
- The chamber of commerce in Jackson, Tenn., in Madison County, is using health scores to help attract businesses to relocate in the area. Companies are asking about the region's health, said Kyle Spurgeon, chamber president. The county fared better than the statewide average on some measures including the number of college graduates and primary-care doctors, in both reports. It slipped in other areas on this year's report.
- LaSalle County, Ill. authorities are continuing with recent programs to distribute nicotine patches to smokers and increase awareness to school officials about diabetes and obesity, said county health department spokeswoman Jenny Barrie. The report emphasized the need to do so, she said.
- Authorities in central Michigan, where the lowest-ranked counties are located, created a "We Can" initiative to improve health measures including obesity, inactivity and poor nutrition. Monthly brainstorming sessions have been held involving officials from local health departments, mental health agencies, colleges and elsewhere, and a working plan is expected to be developed in April, said Mary Kushion, health officer for the Central Michigan District Health Department. "We really do have a common theme and a common mission" Kushion said. "We know that we are much better prepared and able to address the issues than we were" last year.

Attachments



Crime

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
FIRST QUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **CRIME**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
Saturdays	8:00pm	COPS
Saturdays (airs weekly)	8:30pm	COPS
Monday – Friday	1:00pm	COPS
Monday – Friday	1:30pm	COPS

Description: COPS follows law enforcement officers as they answer calls and deal with the subjects and victims involved in the complaints and crimes. (30:00)

Saturdays (airs weekly)	9:00pm	AMERICA'S MOST WANTED
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Description: AMERICA'S MOST WANTED is hosted by John Walsh. The show profiles fugitives and wanted criminals who are being sought by federal, state, or local authorities. The program gives viewers a phone number to call to provide information. (60:00)

Monday – Sunday	10:00 pm	FOX CAROLINA'S MOST WANTED
Monday – Friday	5:00a-9:00am	

Description: The FOX Carolina's Most Wanted airs during the Ten O'clock News on various nights Monday thru Sunday and The Morning News Monday thru Friday. Each segment profiles locally wanted criminals and gives viewers a phone number to call to provide information. Each segment is 45 seconds.

January 6, 2011

Greenville County deputies released a sketch Thursday of a man they said is wanted for questioning in a recent rash of burglaries. Investigators said three burglaries have happened in the Green Valley area in the northern part of the county from Nov. 30 to Dec. 17. Deputies said the person in the sketch is described as white, with dark hair, dark eyes and about 6 feet tall. They said he was last seen in an older model, blue sedan, possibly a Mazda or Toyota. They said two other men were with him. Anyone who recognizes the man in the sketch is asked to call Greenville County Crime Stoppers at 23-CRIME. There is a \$2,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

January 6, 2011

Spartanburg police said that one of their officers and a woman were wounded and another man was killed during a shootout early Thursday morning. The shooting happened at 103-B Owens St. just before 8 a.m. Capt. Randy Hardy, of Spartanburg Public Safety, said that officers with the tactical unit were serving an arrest warrant for Toby Moore at the home. He said when officers entered the home they were met with gunfire. That gunfire wounded Officer Jason Harris, who was shot in the hip. Hardy said that officers returned fire, wounding two other people, identified as Amanda Gentry and William Rodgers. Harris, a six-year veteran of Spartanburg police, was treated at a local hospital and released, Hardy said. Gentry was released from the hospital and booked into the detention center. Jail officials said Gentry is being held on drug charges, but it's unclear if those charges are related to the incident on Owens Street. Rodgers died at a local hospital, Hardy said. Moore was not injured in the shooting and has been arrested, Hardy said. He is charged with four counts of attempted murder and several drug offenses. Officials at the detention center said Moore and Gentry will face a bond judge on Friday. Hardy said that police had been made aware of drug activity at the home, which prompted the arrest warrant for Moore. An emergency medical technician who is embedded in the tactical unit rendered aid to the injured, Hardy said.

January 7, 2011

A Spartanburg County couple was arrested Friday morning after investigators said they attacked two deputies at a convenience store. The attack happened at the Lil' Cricket store at 2170 Fernwood-Glendale Road about 2:30 a.m. Investigators said the two deputies, identified as Chad Dunning and Cpl. David Traxler, arrived at the scene to find 27-year-old Jay Lowrance and 21-year-old Kemyatta Rice-Gist standing in front the store. They said when Lowrance saw the deputies, he began to walk away and tossed a gun beside the store. As one of the deputies tried to put Lowrance in handcuffs, he became combative and assaulted the deputy, investigators said. They said that both deputies struggled with Lowrance. They said that Rice-Gist then began attacking one of the deputies. Investigators said that Traxler was knocked unconscious during the attack. They said the other deputy continued struggling with the man until backup arrived. Dunning suffered injuries to his shoulder and was treated at a local hospital and released, while Traxler was still being treated, the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office said. Lowrance was also treated at a local hospital and released for injuries he suffered during the altercation, investigators said. Lowrance was charged with criminal domestic violence of a high and aggravated nature, unlawful carrying of a pistol, two counts of resisting arrest, and two counts of second-degree assault and battery. Rice-Gist was charged with second-degree assault and battery. Both Lowrance and Rice-Gist were being held at the Spartanburg County Detention Center.

January 11, 2011

Pickens police said that an off-duty police officer was dragged by man who stole from a grocery store. Investigators said that a man shoplifted from the Ingles store on Ann Street on Sunday and got into a silver car. Police said that when an off-duty officer tried to stop the man, he was dragged through the parking lot by the shoplifter's car. Anyone with information about the theft is asked to call the Pickens Police Department at 864-878-6366.

January 12, 2011

Bomb technicians were investigating a report of a suspicious package at a Washington mail facility on Wednesday, days after three incendiary parcels shook the region. Fire trucks, ambulances and police cars were responding to the facility and the street it is on was blocked off. D.C. police spokeswoman Istmania Bonilla did not have any additional information. Richard J. Wolf, a spokesman for the FBI's Baltimore field office, said investigators were aware of the package and were looking into whether it is linked to the ones sent last week. Authorities in Washington and Maryland are still investigating the packages that ignited last week. The first two packages were discovered Thursday and addressed to Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and state Transportation Secretary Beverley Swaim-Staley. The packages smoked and emitted a small flame that singed the fingers of the two employees who opened them. The packages included a note complaining about Maryland's toll-free terrorism tip line, which is sometimes advertised on highway signs urging motorists to report suspicious activity. A day later, a package addressed to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano was reported smoking and popping at a Washington mail facility. Authorities believe Napolitano was targeted in part for a campaign called "see something, say something," that urges people to report suspicious activity. An FBI terrorism task force is investigating the packages, which were sent to an FBI crime lab for analysis. Authorities have no suspects and have been tightlipped about the progress of the probe.

January 13, 2011

Hendersonville police said they are looking for a man after his estranged girlfriend was found dead Wednesday. Police said officers were making a welfare check about noon Wednesday at 1119 Park St. when they found the body of 27-year-old Victoria Jon-Baptiste. Eric Wilson, 40, has been charged with second-degree kidnapping in connection with Jon-Baptiste's death, police said. They said they are waiting on an autopsy before deciding if Wilson will face other charges. Police said that Wilson is also wanted in connection with violating a domestic violence order after domestic disturbances in November and December. Anyone with information with Wilson's whereabouts or Jon-Baptiste's death is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 828-697-STOP.

January 23, 2011

An Upstate teen was hit and killed in Anderson County early Sunday morning, police said. It happened on Salem Church Road just before 3 a.m. Troopers said 23-year-old Janie Smith hit Taylar Burrage, 16, and Kaycee Cromer, 17. Cromer was taken to a local hospital and released, but troopers said Burrage died at the scene. "I don't think it's fair that she's dead and I'm alive," Cromer said. "She was a good girl, you know, like all of us," said Amber Thompson, a friend of Burrage. "(Smith) messed up. She got behind the wheel when she was drinking and now my friend is dead." Investigators said that Burrage and Cromer had sneaked out of Cromer's house about 1 a.m. Sunday. They said the pair were on their way back to Cromer's house when the crash happened. Smith has been charged with two felony drunken driving charges -- one with result in a death, the other with result of great bodily injury, troopers said.

January 23, 2011

Pacolet Mills woman has been accused of hanging a dog from a tree and then setting it on fire. According to an incident report, Miriam Smith admitted to law enforcement that she had killed her nephew's 1-year-old pit bull on Jan. 14. Smith told authorities that the dog had chewed her Bible that she had left on the front porch, according to the incident report. The report said that Smith said she killed the dog because it was a "devil dog." She also said she was worried about children in the neighborhood who could be bitten by the dog. The report said that an officer noticed a mound of dried grass covering the partially burned body of a dog at the home. The report said the dog had an orange extension cord wrapped tightly around its neck and smelled of kerosene. Smith was charged with ill treatment of animals.

January 24, 2011

Greer father accused of killing his 5-month-old daughter has been convicted of killing another daughter 17 years ago. Greenville County deputies said that Daron Davis, 42, was arrested Friday and charged with after an investigation revealed that he had severely injured his 5-month-old daughter earlier in the week. Deputies said that the baby was placed on life support on Jan. 19, but she died at 7:32 p.m. Sunday. Davis is charged with homicide by child abuse. He is being held at the Greenville County Detention Center. Davis was convicted of homicide by child abuse in the death of his 11-month-old daughter in Duncan in 1994. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but only served half of that sentence. When questioned about Davis' early release, the solicitor's office said the sentencing was more lenient 17 years ago, and convicts did not have to serve the majority of their sentence. The Department of Corrections said Davis was released early on work credit. "It's a very sad time to know that this individual had been convicted of an offense of the same magnitude and now another loss of a small child," said Sam Cureton, of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. Originally, the Greer Police Department was handling the latest case against Davis, but the victim's grandmother works for the city. The department handed the case to the Greenville County Sheriff's Office for investigation.

January 25, 2011

A Spartanburg couple have been charged in connection with a child sexual abuse case, Spartanburg County deputies said Tuesday. Deputies said they were contacted by the Department of Social Services on Aug. 26, 2010, about the neglect of four children. They said investigators found the home to be flea infested with holes in the floor and spoiled food and trash bags lying around, without a working stove or refrigerator. They said the house was deemed unfit for human habitation and the four children were placed in DSS custody. Investigators said that while the children were in protective custody it was learned that 41-year-old Steven Whitley had sexually abused two of the children. They said the abuse was brought to the attention of 45-year-old Rebecca Kingsley, who also lived at the home, and she did nothing about it. Whitley was charged with criminal sexual conduct with a minor under 11 years of age, first-degree criminal sexual conduct with a minor 11 to 14 years of age and four counts of unlawful neglect of a child. Kingsley was charged with accessory after the fact to a felony and four counts of unlawful neglect of a child. Both Kingsley and Whitley were being held at the Spartanburg County Detention Center. Deputies said they expect to make another arrest as the investigation continues.

February 1, 2011

A man was shot in the face outside a bowling alley early Tuesday morning, Greenville police said. The shooting happened at Star Lanes on South Pleasantburg Drive about 3:30 a.m. Police said they were called to St. Francis Hospital in downtown after a man showed up with a gunshot wound to his face. Investigators said the man told them he had walked up to a vehicle that he believed belonged to someone he met at a nearby sports bar. The man said when he walked up to the car a man inside pointed a gun at him and demanded money. The victim told police that as the gun-wielding man left the fire several shots from his

vehicle, hitting him in the face. Anyone with information about the shooting was asked to call Greenville County Crime Stoppers at 23-CRIME.

February 7, 2011

Several shots were fired in the parking lot of the Anderson Mall on Saturday night, Anderson police said. The shooting happened at about 8 p.m. Police said some extra-duty officers were at the mall when several shots rang out in the parking lot. They said the officers saw a gray car in the area where the shots were fired. They said three people were inside the car and a gun was found on the floorboard of the driver's side. Police said the driver of the vehicle was 19-year-old Lavance Gadsden, of Anderson. He was charged with violation of South Carolina's gun law, but police said they are not sure if he was the one who fired the shots. No one was injured in the shooting, police said.

February 7, 2011

An Oconee County teacher was charged Friday with two counts of sexual [battery](#) with a student, the Oconee County Sheriff's Office said. Deanna Robert, 43, of West Union, was a teacher at Tamassee-Salem Middle/High School. The Oconee County School District said she no longer works for the district. Robert was released on \$15,000 [bond](#). Deputies and the school district said the investigation is ongoing. The school district said it is cooperating fully with investigators.

February 7, 2011

The former chief executive convicted in one of the largest bankruptcies in South Carolina history has lost his appeal for a new trial and less time in prison. The state Supreme Court on Monday denied Ronald Sheppard's request for a reduction in his 20-year prison sentence. In 2007, a Lexington County jury found the 53-year-old Sheppard guilty of securities fraud, conspiracy and obtaining property by false pretenses in the 2003 collapse of HomeGold and its subsidiary, Carolina Investors. More than 8,000 investors lost \$275 million. Sheppard's attorneys had argued that their client received a much harsher sentence than the rest of the company executives who either pleaded guilty or were convicted in the case. Sheppard will be eligible for parole in December.

February 8, 2011

An Upstate couple is facing charges after deputies said they falsely claimed their daughter had cancer and cashed a dead man's Social Security checks. Alicia and Steven Kelly both faced several charges, including swindling, the Greenwood County Sheriff's Office said. Deputies said the couple had convinced the teen that she had cancer, giving her fake medicine and creating a website chronicling her battle with the disease. Deputies said they believed that as time went on, the girl realized she wasn't sick, but she was too scared to bring the truth to light. During questioning about the cancer scheme, deputies said Alicia Kelly told them that they could find her grandfather's body in a camper. Police said they believe the man was dead for more than a year. During that time, the Kellys cashed his Social Security and retirement checks, deputies said. The couple's five children had not been to school in years, deputies said. The kids were with their grandparents Monday night, authorities said.

February 8, 2011

Police said they are still searching for the mother of the so-called "Bi-Lo Baby" who was found in a toilet at the Bi-Lo Center on Friday night. Sgt. Jason Rampey, of the Greenville Police Department, said someone at the arena heard crying coming from the women's bathroom and found the boy about 11:30 p.m. He said evidence indicated that he was born there. Investigators said the child was no more than a couple of hours old when he was discovered. "We don't think it's physically possible that the mother would not know that she had given birth to a child," Rampey said. The baby was taken to Greenville Memorial Hospital to be treated for hypothermia, where he was listed in critical condition Monday morning. "We ask that the mother seek medical attention herself, and also ask that she come forward so that we can determine what happened," Rampey said. Police said earlier that night, the Bi-Lo Center was full of people attending the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Authorities are asking anyone who might know the mother to call 864-467-5333.

February 9, 2011

Seven people are facing charges Tuesday, after investigators said they were involved in an illegal prescription drug ring. Mirian Burke, Nancy Carter, Cynthia Grubb, Myra Rhodes, Amanda Richardson, Alice Silcox and John Wardell appeared before a Greenwood Magistrate on Tuesday afternoon, accused of illegally obtaining prescription drugs. According to warrants issued by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, at least two of the suspects used a doctor's registration number in order to obtain the drugs. Investigators said that the women charged worked at Greenwood Ob-Gyn, John Wardell did not. Authorities said the prescriptions were obtained between September 2009 and January of this year at several pharmacies in Newberry County. Each of the suspects was released on a personal recognizance bond. The doctor, who is not charged in this case, also is listed as an employee at Greenwood Ob-Gyn. Stay with Fox Carolina for more on this developing story.

February 9, 2011

A former county employee was in court Tuesday, accused of having sex with a woman whose medication caused her to be mentally and physically incapacitated at the time. Corey Grumelot, 39, of Greenwood, was arrested Tuesday afternoon, following a South Carolina Law Enforcement Division investigation. According to warrants, Grumelot drove the 26-year-old victim to a motel in a county vehicle and had sex with her. Grumelot also is accused of driving the woman to a local hospital and providing false information to hospital staff about where and how he met her, the warrants said. Grumelot is charged with third-degree criminal sexual conduct and misconduct. On Tuesday, bail for Grumelot was set at \$20,000. He was told to have no contact with the victim. He was also asked to surrender his passport due to the nature of the charge. The investigation is continuing. Stay with www.foxcarolina.com for more on this story.

February 9, 2011

The mother who is accused of leaving her baby in the toilet at the BI-LO Center in Greenville was in court Wednesday morning for a bond hearing. Jessica Blackham, 24, was given a \$30,000 surety bond by a Greenville Municipal Court judge. She is charged with two counts of felony child abuse and one count of unlawful neglect of a child. Blackham didn't say much during the hearing. Her parents spoke on her behalf. They said their daughter didn't know she was pregnant. Her parents told the judge that Blackham doesn't remember much about the events at the BI-LO Center last Friday night. They also said their daughter has amnesia. Blackham said she doesn't know for sure who the father is of her baby, but she has an idea. Police arrested Blackham Tuesday night after she turned herself in at the police station. Investigators said a BI-LO Center employee discovered the newborn baby in the women's restroom. They said they believe the baby was born there. Investigators said the child was no more than a couple of hours old when the employee found him. The baby boy is listed in serious but stable condition at a Greenville hospital. Blackham is separated from her husband of five years more than one year ago. The couple has a four-year-old child together. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest on this developing story.

February 15, 2011

Greenville County Sheriff Steve Loftis said that a deputy shot a man three times in the parking lot of the Woodruff Road Walmart on Tuesday afternoon. Loftis said that the man walked into the store carrying knives and began making threats to harm himself. He said by the time deputies arrived, the man was outside the store, confronting them. Loftis said that the man threw one of the knives at a deputy and cut him on his left leg. He said that a deputy then fired three shots, hitting the knife-wielding man in the stomach, leg and arm. The deputy's injuries appeared to be non-life-threatening, Loftis said. Witnesses said the man who was shot was taken to the hospital. There was no word on his identity or his condition. The State Law Enforcement Division was called to the scene. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest on this developing story.

February 15, 2011

A Greenville man and teenager were charged Tuesday in connection with the beating death of a homeless man last year, the Greenville County Sheriff's Office said. Deputies said that Elliott Adams, 35, and a 15-year-old boy are charged with murder in the death of 55-year-old Terry White. White was found severely beaten on Aug. 30, 2010, in a wooded area at the corner of Cedar Lane Road and West Blue Ridge Drive near a gas station where he had been living, investigators said. They said White died from his injuries three days later. Deputies said that Adams was already being held at the Greenville County Detention Center on unrelated charges when he was charged in connection with White's death. The teen is being held in the juvenile area of the Detention Center, where he awaits a hearing in Family Court to determine if he will be charged as an adult. His name was not immediately released because of his age.

February 17, 2011

Greenville County Sheriff Steve Loftis identified a man Wednesday who was shot three times by a deputy in the parking lot of the Woodruff Road Walmart on Tuesday. Loftis said during a news conference that Dunyell Gordon picked up two butcher knives from a store shelf and began threatening to hurt himself. On Tuesday, Loftis said that Gordon met deputies in the parking lot of the store after someone called for help. He said Gordon was waving the knives around. He said that Gordon threw one of the knives at a deputy, cutting his left leg. He said that was when another deputy fired three shots at Gordon, hitting him in the stomach, arm and leg. Gordon was airlifted to a local hospital, where he was listed in critical condition as of Tuesday night. Loftis said Gordon is expected to recover. Loftis said Wednesday that Gordon is charged with attempted murder. The sheriff said from the time his deputies were confronted by Gordon, he was telling them to shoot him. "The suspect wanted to die, and I think he was hoping that a police officer or a sheriff's deputy was going to end his life," Loftis said. Gordon's neighbors said he is an Iraq war veteran, who told them he is on medical discharge. Kimberly Calhoun, a neighbor, said she has never seen a violent side of Gordon. She said her dogs and Gordon's dogs play together, and that he is always friendly and that they have good conversation. She said she was shocked to hear of Tuesday's event. Mauldin police said they have responded to Gordon's home four times. Police said in December, Gordon was charged with criminal domestic violence. Detectives said Gordon hit his wife, and threatened her with a Taser after he got angry while looking for his keys. They said Gordon was released from jail on bond. Investigators said they also went to Gordon's home on Tuesday before the shooting at Walmart. They said Gordon's wife reported him missing at about 7 a.m., and she told them he could be dangerous. She called back to tell investigators that he had been located at about 2 p.m. Greenville County deputies said the first 911 call at Walmart came in at 1:09 p.m. Tuesday. They said deputies arrived at the store about three minutes later.


February 18, 2011

Police were investigating a suspicious package found outside a Marion restaurant Thursday afternoon. The package was found in front of the Open Flame Restaurant at 8 a.m. Marion Police Chief Mark Brooks said the owner of the restaurant said he received a call Wednesday from a man who tried to get a job at the restaurant saying there would be a package waiting for him Thursday morning. Brooks said that man, identified as Gregory Packett, was arrested Thursday morning when the package was found in front of the restaurant. He said the same man had threatened the owner of the restaurant before, and was due in court on that charge Friday. Investigators are awaiting test results on a substance found inside a Tupperware container to determine the nature of the package, Brooks said. He said crews have determined the substance is not explosive. Firefighters could be seen blocking the parking lot of a restaurant in a cell phone picture sent to FOX Carolina from the scene. Both the FBI and State Bureau of Investigation were at the scene.

February 18, 2011

A Greenville man was arrested Thursday and faces 108 charges in connection with a car break-in spree that stretched over five months last year, the Greenville County Sheriff's Office said. Deputies said that between June and October of last year, several people reported their cars being broken into in the Eastside, Berea and Taylors communities. On Thursday, deputies said Jeremiah Bowen, 24, was charged with 32 counts of auto breaking, 30 counts of petit larceny, 10 counts of financial transaction card fraud, seven counts of criminal conspiracy, three counts of grand larceny and two counts of receiving or possession of stolen goods. Deputies said they are also looking for Brandon Trotter, 25, in connection with the rash of car break-ins. He is charged with 16 counts of auto breaking and 14 counts of petit larceny. Bowen was being held at the Greenville County Detention Center on \$422,000 bond.

February 21, 2011

Pickens County Superintendent Henry Hunt said Monday the principal and bookkeeper at Liberty High School are on paid leave. Hunt said the leave for Randy Gilstrap, the principal, and Buea DeNard, the [financial](#) secretary, comes as the financial records of the school are being reviewed. Hunt told FOX Carolina that because this is a personnel matter and a review is under way, he cannot make any further comments. School board members are scheduled to meet Monday night. [School district](#)  spokeswoman Julie Thompson said Gilstrap has worked for the school district since December 1980 and DeNard since August 1996.

February 21, 2011

The stepmother of a disabled North Carolina girl has been indicted on a murder charge in the child's death. A grand jury in Catawba County handed down the indictment Monday morning, charging Elisa Baker with second-degree murder. Elisa Baker

had previously been charged with obstructing justice in the investigation of Zahra Baker's death. The 10-year-old was reported missing in October, and police later found her remains. A search warrant unsealed last month said that Elisa Baker led police to the places where they found Zahra's remains. She claimed that her husband, Adam Baker, dismembered the body. Adam Baker has denied that. Attorneys for Elisa Baker did not return calls from The Associated Press seeking comment Monday. Prosecutors said Monday during a press conference that they have no credible evidence that anyone other than Elisa Baker will be charged in connection with the girl's death.

March 7, 2011

The man suspected in several rapes along the East Coast might be linked to more than 10 unsolved rape cases in the Upstate, local authorities said. Aaron Thomas, an unemployed truck driver, was arrested in Connecticut. Investigators said Thomas is a suspect in sexual assaults from Virginia to Rhode Island over the past 12 years. Spartanburg County deputies said they are using DNA to determine if Thomas is connected to 11 unsolved rape cases in the Upstate. Greenville police said they are also trying to determine if any of their unsolved rape cases may be linked to Thomas.

March 7, 2011

Union police said they are looking for three people in connection with copper thefts at an abandoned school. Police said they were called to the old Excelsior School building at 212 Culp St. last Wednesday. Investigators said that when officers arrived they found the ceiling inside the school was missing several tiles and that the track system used to hold up the tiles had been damaged. They found that the electrical conduit in the ceiling had been cut and copper wiring was removed. Police said they are looking for Quiney Simmons, 18; Markell Simmons, 19; and Jules Rice Jr., 28, all of Union, in connection with the copper theft. Warrants, charging the three with third-degree burglary, grand larceny and malicious damage, have been issued, police said. Police have already arrested 27-year-old Jonvan Spears, of Union, in connection with the thefts. Anyone with information about their whereabouts is asked to call Union County Crime Stoppers at 864-427-0800.

March 8, 2011

Three people were arrested Tuesday after an undercover operation, the Laurens County Sheriff's Office said. Deputies said 47-year-old William Campbell, 50-year-old Jimmy Lewis and 54-year-old Carolyn Phillips, all of Clinton, were each charged with manufacturing methamphetamine and possession of methamphetamine. Investigators said the three were seen buying items used to make methamphetamine from several stores in Laurens County during an undercover narcotic surveillance operation. They said at the end of operation, several items that were purchased during the surveillance were found in the trio's car. Campbell, Lewis and Phillips were being held at the Eugene Johnson Detention Center.

March 10, 2011

The U.S. Labor Department is suing the owner of a Greenville accounting firm, saying it took thousands of dollars from the company's 401(k) plan. The government said Thursday it has sued Parnell and Co. LLC in Greenville and its owner, Christopher Parnell. The lawsuit said Parnell was a part of an investment group that received funds from the 401(k) plan, and that investment resulted in \$75,000 in lost assets and earnings. The lawsuit said Parnell and other investment group members received at least \$120,000 from the group's real estate transactions, but the 401(k) plan has not gotten any proceeds. The government wants Parnell ordered to repay losses and be barred from controlling any retirement plan. The Associated Press reported that court papers listed no attorney for Parnell and there was no number listed for him.

March 14, 2011

South Carolina's high court has reversed a murder conviction for a Travelers Rest man in the death of his sister's boyfriend. The Supreme Court ruled Monday a circuit judge should not have let 39-year-old Jack Edward Earl Parker be tried a second time in the death of Robert Lee Stewart. A judge in 2003 granted a mistrial after defense attorneys said prosecutors gave them a crime scene video with graphic images blocked out but showed jurors a clear version. Parker was convicted in a second trial. The high court said the second judge should have granted Parker's request to dismiss the verdict because of double jeopardy. Parker is serving a life sentence. His attorneys said Parker will be released from prison if there are no other charges against him. Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor Walt Wilkins said his office is reviewing Parker's case to determine if any additional charge can be brought against him.

March 14, 2011

Pickens County deputies said a man put a 5-year-old child's hand on a kerosene heater as punishment for wetting the bed. Ernesto Sanchez was charged with child abuse, deputies said. The child's mother, Melinda Ramey, was charged with abuse or allowing another to cause harm to a child. Deputies said she was charged because she did not stop Sanchez from burning the child and because she did not report the burning. Deputies said Sanchez lived with Ramey but is not the child's father. According to the arrest warrant, the burns on the child's hands were large and will cause permanent scarring or disfigurement. The child, along with the two other children in the home, are now with family members.

March 22, 2011

A standoff in Simpsonville on Tuesday afternoon ended with what deputies said was the suicide of the man holed up inside the home. The standoff happened at 177 Durbin Creek Road. Susan Clarke, of the Greenville County School District, said Bryson Elementary School and Golden Strip Child Development Center were locked down as a precaution during the standoff. Matt Armstrong, of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, said deputies were trying to serve arrest warrants to the man when he barricaded himself in the house. FOX Carolina's Joe Gagnon said that authorities heard gunshots from inside the home just before 3 p.m. He said when they went inside they found the man dead. He said authorities did not fire their weapons. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest on this developing story.

March 22, 2011

Twenty-seven people were charged in connection with a four-county, undercover operation concentrating on those who illegally buy scrap metal, authorities said. The sheriffs from Spartanburg, Laurens, Cherokee and Union counties used a joint news conference Monday to announce the operation and its results. As part of the sting, authorities said, undercover officers were sent into several Upstate businesses, trying to sell scrap metal. They said people who bought the metal without asking for identification were arrested. Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright said scrap metal theft has been a major problem in the Upstate. "People who have retired have a right to live in peace and not be bothered by these thugs, and we're not going to take it anymore," Wright said. Wright said he needs more businesses to help him track down scrap metal thieves. He said the thefts are costing homeowners and business owners millions of dollars each year. Deputies said that in 2010 there were more than 1,000 metal thefts in Spartanburg County, 101 thefts in Cherokee County, 144 thefts in Laurens County and 122 thefts in Union County.

March 28, 2011

The director of Swain County's Department of Social Services was suspended with pay Monday night as part of what officials called investigative leave. A Swain County commissioner, who did not want to be identified, confirmed that the DSS board voted to suspend director Tammy Cagle in 30 day time periods until the State Bureau of Investigation has finished its investigation into the death of 16-month-old Aubrey Littlejohn. The Swain County DSS is under investigation after reports of abuse were filed but never acted upon, according to a search warrant. Warrants from the SBI said that DSS received reports of abuse at Aubrey's home, but ignored them. Investigators are now trying to determine if Aubrey died because social workers failed to protect her. At the beginning of March, the Swain County commission recommended that the DSS board suspend Cagle, but the board voted the recommendation down. The Commission then recommended that the board members step down, and three of the five members stepped down and were replaced. No charges have been filed in connection with the SBI investigation.

March 29, 2011

On Monday, Greenville police announced the arrest of two men in connection with the robbery and beating death of a Greek immigrant 33 years ago. Police said 53-year-old Thomas Bikas was found dead on a sidewalk near his Hampton Avenue home by a passer-by who flagged down a police car on Nov. 24, 1977. They said Bikas' wallet was missing. On Monday, police said they arrested Darnell Guyton and Billy Dudley in connection with Bikas' death. Both Guyton and Dudley were charged with strong-arm robbery and murder. One of the men was arrested in Minnesota and the other in West Virginia, police said. They said both men waived extradition and will be brought back to South Carolina soon to face these charges. Police said that work done by the initial investigative team, plus the current Cold Case Unit led to the arrests. Bikas' case was one of three cold cases listed as solved on the Greenville Police Department's website. There are 12 open cold cases listed on the website.

March 29, 2011

Travelers Rest police said a forensics team was sent to a woman's home who was last seen March 17. Police said they searched the home of 40-year-old Tammy Lewis, but there were no signs of foul play. They said an officer guarded the home Monday night until the forensics team returned Tuesday. Chief Lance Crowe said several people have been interviewed in connection with Lewis' disappearance, but no charges have been filed. Crowe said Lewis is considered a missing person, but investigators have heard disturbing theories about her disappearance. Lewis was described as 5 feet 6 inches tall, 145 pounds, with bright blond, nearly white, hair. Anyone with information about Lewis disappearance was asked to call Greenville County Crime Stoppers at 23-CRIME.

March 29, 2011

A former Greenwood County sheriff's deputy fired two years ago after charges of misconduct has been accused of stealing heavy equipment. The Index-Journal of Greenwood reported Tuesday that 38-year-old Scott Masterson was indicted last week on eight counts of grand larceny. Masterson was fired in 2009 after he was arrested and charged with misconduct in office. Authorities said stolen farm equipment was found at Masterson's home in Abbeville County. Officials said Masterson had worked at the sheriff's department since 1995, and it was not immediately clear if he had an attorney. This case has been investigated by the State Law Enforcement Division.

Attachments



Education

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
FIRST QUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **EDUCATION**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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January 4, 2011

You might call it multiple choice, but Anderson County School District 5 is trying to find out where middle school students will go to school in the fall. The school district wants to hear from the community before they start telling students to switch schools. This fall two new schools will join the existing three middle schools. District officials sent a letter home with kids Monday to help them determine where new district lines would be drawn. "We are asking parents to rank the parameters in order of importance from one to six," said Bill Baker, District 5 communications coordinator. "We also ask them to add any additional parameters they think should be considered." Baker said those parameters will determine how neighborhoods are split up and where kids will eventually attend high school. The school board is expected to make a decision Jan. 11.

January 8, 2011

With the possibility of significant snowfall across western North Carolina over the weekend, Western Carolina University is canceling all classes Monday at all locations. University officials said they made the decision based on the [weather forecast](#) so students could delay their plans to travel to the campus for the start of the spring semester. Weather forecasters are forecasting the possibility of accumulating snow for much of western North Carolina and the surrounding region into early next week. Students returning to campus for the spring semester, and other individuals traveling to Cullowhee, are advised to check weather and road conditions along their planned route and to make adjustments to travel plans as necessary. University officials will continue to monitor weather conditions and will announce additional schedule changes as the situation warrants. Although Monday's classes are canceled, student services, including [residence halls](#) and dining venues, are open and operational for students who already are on campus.

January 10, 2011

Monday's heavy snow forced some school districts to cancel school for Tuesday. A [winter storm warning](#) was in effect for all of the area until 6 a.m. Tuesday. Forecasters said that as much as a foot of snow could fall in the highest elevations. They said 6-10 inches of snow could fall in the Greenville area, with amounts decreasing further south. The following school districts have already canceled Tuesday's classes: Abbeville County, Anderson County school districts one through five, Asheville City, Cherokee County, Elbert County, Franklin County, Graham County, Greenville County, Greenwood district 50 and 52, Haywood County, Henderson County, Jackson County Blue Ridge district, Jackson County Smokey Mountain district, Laurens County district 55, Laurens County district 56, Macon County, Madison County, McDowell County, Mitchell County, Newberry County, Oconee County, Pickens County, Polk County, Rutherford County, Spartanburg County districts one through seven, Swain County, Union County, Ware Shoals district 51 and Yancey County. Both Duke Energy and Progress Energy reported spotty [power](#) outages at noon. Rosylin Weston, spokeswoman for the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, said that the runways are open at GSP, but many of the airlines have either canceled for delayed flights. She said crews will continue working on the runways until flights begin to make sure they are clear when the airlines decide to begin their service. The South Carolina Department of Transportation said as of 8 a.m. crews have spread 4,025 tons of salt and 1,130 tons of sand on roads across the state. They said 322,090 gallons of brine solution has been sprayed on the roads. SCDOT said its goal is to keep the interstates flowing, so that is where plow crews are concentrating. Officials said once the interstates are clear, they will begin working on the secondary roads. The Highway Patrol said that roads are not clear of snow, making it difficult to tell where the road ends and the shoulder begins. They said drivers should stay off the roads unless it becomes absolutely necessary to travel. Forecasters said that the precipitation will begin changing to sleet and freezing rain by Monday night, making roads even more dangerous. Snow was also reported in Columbia, Orangeburg and Walterboro. The Ravenel Bridge linking Charleston and Mount Pleasant was closed early Monday morning, but reopened Monday afternoon. South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford ordered all state offices closed Monday. Those state offices will be on a two-hour delay on Tuesday, though there could be further delays once the Governor examines weather conditions on Tuesday. Many local and county offices were also closed on Monday. Many of those offices will remain closed on Tuesday as well. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest on the winter storm.

January 24, 2011

A junior ROTC instructor at Camden High School has been charged with pointing a gun at a 12-year-old boy. Fifty-one-year-old Timothy Loren Webb, of Lugoff, was arrested Jan. 19 and has been suspended with pay while the case is investigated. Webb is accused of pointing a gun at a neighbor's 12-year-old son when he tried to retrieve his dog from Webb's yard. The boy told Kershaw County sheriff's deputies that Webb pointed the gun at the dog and then the boy, saying he would shoot the dog if he came on his property. Webb's attorney, Deborah Butcher, said her client was carrying a flashlight during the Dec. 20 confrontation, not a gun. School district spokeswoman Mary Anne Byrd said Webb has been at Camden High since 2007 and works with the drill and rifle team in the fall.

January 27, 2011

School officials announced Thursday the days Pickens County students will have to make up time lost because of winter weather in December and January. Pickens County Schools said that students missed six days over the two-month period. They said the first three [makeup](#) days are set for March 18, April 25 and June 3. They said June 3 will be a half day for students from kindergarten to 11th grade. The district said no decision has been made regarding the remaining three days because legislation to forgive them has been introduced in Columbia. A decision on those days will be announced once the outcome of the legislation is clear. School officials said May 31, which was originally scheduled as a half day, will now be a full day for students. Exams for seniors are scheduled for May 23-26. Underclassmen will take exams May 27 to June 2. Graduation ceremonies for all four high schools will still take place on June 3 at Littlejohn Coliseum.

January 31, 2011

For months on the campaign trail, Gov. Nikki Haley touted privatizing South Carolina's school bus fleet as one possibility for [saving money](#). But some experts say the switch could end up costing more. Haley used the idea last year as an example of how she would trim the budget as the state confronts an \$830 million shortfall. The governor said South Carolina's schoolchildren deserve newer buses, even if the plan doesn't save [money](#). South Carolina is the only U.S. state to own and maintain a statewide school bus fleet, though no state has a statewide contract for school bus service. Government workers can't join unions, but private workers can. That could mean higher wages for the drivers if they unionize, and therefore, a bigger tab for the state.

February 10, 2011

The Clemson [football](#) team's collective grade-point average fell to 2.41 during the fall semester, a drop from last spring. The school announced the academic [performance](#) of its 19 athletic teams on Wednesday. In the spring semester, the football team registered a 2.56 GPA. On the field, the Tigers went 6-7, their first losing season since 1998. First-year basketball coaches Brad Brownell and Itoro Coleman had strong academic starts for their teams. Brownell's men posted a 2.76 GPA, their highest since spring semester 1997. Coleman's women had a 2.75 GPA, their best showing since spring semester 2007. The women's cross country team had the athletic department's best academic performance with a 3.62 GPA.

February 22, 2011

South Carolina school districts would not have to make up missed snow days under a proposal advanced by legislators. The [House](#) on Tuesday approved a bill allowing districts to waive up to five school days from the state mandate that days missed because of bad weather must be made up. The Senate approved the proposal last week. It requires another perfunctory vote in the House before heading to the governor's desk. Schools across the state closed at least part of the week of Jan. 10-14 following a snow and ice storm. Legislators have introduced a host of local bills that grant waivers to schools they represent. The proposal by Sen. Nikki Setzler, of West Columbia, would cover all public schools and homeschools. Local school boards would decide which days to waive or make up.

March 9, 2011

Mold was found in the media center at Hollis Elementary School on Tuesday, Greenville County Schools spokesman Oby Lyles said Wednesday. Lyles said the mold was found behind book shelves during maintenance work. Crews have started cleaning bookshelves, books and furniture in the media center, Lyles said. He said the carpet in the room will also be replaced

this week. Lyles said the media center will be tested before reopening. He said areas adjacent to the room will also be tested as a precaution. Special needs students have been relocated to limit their exposure to the media center, Lyles said.

March 15, 2011

South Carolina quarterback Stephen Garcia has been suspended for the first week of spring practice for violating team rules. Gamecocks coach Steve Spurrier wouldn't specify what the senior did, but hinted that it happened sometime last year. Spurrier took only a few questions after South Carolina's first practice of the spring, but did say Garcia had been following team rules this semester. Garcia now has missed at least part of three of his five spring practices on campus. Three run-ins with the law during his first 15 months at South Carolina caused him to miss all offseason practices in 2007 and 2008. Spurrier said sophomore backup quarterback Andrew Clifford also will miss a week of practice for breaking the rules.

March 15, 2011

The Anderson University men's basketball team earned a spot in the Elite 8 of the NCAA Division II tournament Tuesday night. The Trojans defeated Augusta State in Augusta 75-73 in overtime. Anderson broke Augusta State's winning streak of 48 straight games at home. The Trojans will head to Springfield, Mass., for the Elite 8. The team plays West Liberty next Wednesday.

March 15, 2011

Matt Dickey led a late run that brought overtime, and J.P. Primm hit five free throws and had a decisive steal in the closing seconds Tuesday night, sending North Carolina-Asheville to an 81-77 victory over Arkansas-Little Rock in a dramatic opening game for the NCAA tournament. The Bulldogs (20-13) will play Pittsburgh, the top seed in the Southeast, on Thursday in Washington, D.C. UNC Asheville opened the "First Four" with a late comeback led by its best player. The Bulldogs led for only 51 seconds in regulation, before Dickey asserted himself. He scored 14 of the Bulldogs' last 18 points in regulation, including a 3 with 10.5 seconds to go that tied it. Primm and Dickey had 22 points apiece. Alex Garcia-Mendoza matched his career high with 21 points for Arkansas-Little Rock (19-17).

March 16, 2011

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has removed the namesake of the University of South Carolina's business school from the university's board of trustees and replaced her with a campaign donor. Officials said Tuesday that Haley removed financier Darla Moore as a trustee last week. Moore has donated tens of millions of dollars to the school and pledged some \$70 million to her alma mater. Haley spokesman Rob Godfrey said Haley respects what Moore has done for the university and the state. But he said the governor wanted someone who could provide a fresh perspective. Moore had been the governor's appointee to the board since 1999. Haley replaced her with Lexington attorney Tommy Cofield. Besides giving to South Carolina, Moore also donated \$10 million to Clemson in her father's honor.

March 16, 2011

Jerai Grant scored a career-best 22 points and fast-starting Clemson built a double-figure lead and never backed off in beating Alabama-Birmingham 70-52 on Tuesday night in an NCAA First Four game at the University of Dayton Arena. In a matchup of No. 12 seeds, the Tigers (22-11) went on a 21-2 run in the first half and never let the big lead slip away, as they had in several recent games. Clemson hurried out after the game to catch a flight to a second-round game against fifth-seeded West Virginia (20-11) on Thursday afternoon in Tampa, Fla. Milton Jennings added 11 points and Tanner Smith and Devin Booker each had 10 for Clemson, picked to finish seventh in the Atlantic Coast Conference. Jamarr Sanders had 19 and Dexter Fields 12 for UAB, regular-season champions of Conference USA.

March 22, 2011

Four South Carolina schools are named Palmetto's Finest for 2011. The elementary school winners are Bethel Elementary in Simpsonville in Greenville County, and William M. Reeves Jr. Elementary in Summerville in Dorchester 2. The other winners are Loris Middle in Horry County and Wren High in Piedmont, in Anderson 1. The annual awards ceremony was Tuesday night at the Koger Center in Columbia. The 10 finalists were announced in January. The awards recognize schools with high-achieving students, innovative education programs, high-quality teachers and strong community involvement. They are

presented yearly by Carolina First and the South Carolina Association of School Administrators. This is the 33rd year for the awards. The recognition is the main award. All finalists received a plaque. The winners also received a banner and bumper stickers.

Attachments



Environment

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
FIRST QUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **ENVIRONMENT**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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January 3, 2011

The next phase of construction on Interstate 385 was set to start Monday night, but South Carolina Department of Transportation trucks were parked instead at the Mauldin station. SCDOT Workers said construction cannot start unless the temperature is above 35 degrees, anything lower than that and the asphalt becomes too thick. In the meantime, most Upstate drivers are preparing for when construction does start. Some were busy mapping out alternate routes Monday night. "I'm guessing if I'm heading north I'll probably go across 14 and if not, maybe the Southern Connector will get a little traffic out of this, too," said Daryl Boe, a local motorist. The 5 1/2-mile stretch between Simpsonville and Greenville will be widened to six lanes. The \$65 million project also includes repaving and installing a median barrier wall. The project includes \$37 million in stimulus money and is expected to take 2 1/2 years. "I don't like it because it's going to be a bigger commute to work and a lot of time to get here," said Zack Taylor, another driver. "Well, I think it's badly needed on 385 south between Simpsonville and Mauldin. The roads are a little bit bumpy," said Kurt Roeder, who owns an ABC store. He said the project may boost his business. "Most of my customers are basically from the Mauldin area. I don't have a lot of people coming up from the Simpsonville area to buy."

January 4, 2011

Celebratory fireworks likely sent thousands of discombobulated blackbirds into such a tizzy that they crashed into homes, cars and each other before plummeting to their deaths in central Arkansas, scientists say. Still, officials acknowledge it's unlikely they'll ever pinpoint a cause with certainty. So for the small town of Beebe, Ark., where New Year's revelers spent the holiday weekend cleaning up between 4,000 and 5,000 dead red-winged blackbirds, The Mystery of Why the Birds Fell Out of the Sky remains unsolved. Some speculated that a bout of bad weather was to blame. Others said one confused bird could have led the group in a fatal plunge. A few spooked schoolkids even guessed that the birds had committed mass suicide. "There was probably some physical reason, but I doubt anyone will ever know what it was," said Thurman Booth, the state's wildlife services director. The birds were the second mass wildlife death in Arkansas in recent days. Last week, about 83,000 dead and dying drum fish washed up along a 20-mile stretch of the Arkansas River, about 100 miles west of Beebe. Wildlife officials say the fish deaths are not related to the dead birds, and that because mainly one species of fish was affected, it is likely they were stricken by an illness. Full test results could take up to a month. Some 360 miles to the south of Beebe, Louisiana state biologists were investigating a similar bird die-off. The Advocate reported that about 500 red-winged blackbirds and starlings fell from the sky Monday in Point Coupee Parish, near the city of Labarre. It was not immediately clear if the mysterious mass bird deaths were linked. While officials examine bird carcasses in Arkansas for signs of disease and labs test the contents of their stomachs for toxins, the tale of the blackbirds' tumble is quickly turning into the stuff of local legend. The blackbirds rained onto rooftops and sidewalks and into fields. One struck a woman walking her dog. Another hit a police cruiser. Some say an umbrella was one resident's only protection from the falling birds. Birds were "littering the streets, the yards, the driveways, everywhere," said Robby King, a county wildlife officer in Beebe, a community of 5,000 northeast of Little Rock. "It was hard to drive down the street in some places without running over them." A few stunned survivors stumbled around like drunken partiers. There was little light across the countryside at the time, save for the glimmer of fireworks and some lightning on the horizon. In the tumult, many birds probably lost their bearings. "The blackbirds were flying at rooftop level instead of treetop level" to avoid explosions above, said Karen Rowe, an ornithologist with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. "Blackbirds have poor eyesight, and they started colliding with things." Shane Roberts said it sounded like hail pelting his house. "I turn and look across my yard, and there's all these

lumps," Roberts said. His 16-year-old daughter, Alex, spent Saturday morning picking them up with her bare hands. "Their legs are really squishy," she said. For some people, the scene unfolding shortly before midnight evoked images of the apocalypse and cut short New Year's celebrations. Many families phoned police instead of popping champagne. "I think the switchboard lit up pretty good," said Beebe police Capt. Eddie Cullum. "For all the doomsdayers, that was definitely the end of the world." Paul Duke filled three five-gallon buckets with dead birds on New Year's Day. "They were on the roof of the house, in the yard, on the sidewalks, in the street," said Duke, a suspension supervisor at a nearby school. A few dead birds still littered town streets Monday. The city hired an environmental company that got rid of the dead birds. The disposal company declined to talk to reporters. The birds will not be missed. Large roosts like the one at Beebe can have thousands of birds in one tree that leave ankle- to knee-deep piles of droppings in places. "The whole sky turns black every morning and every night," Roberts said, as a few live birds chirped and hopped from tree to tree behind his home. Red-winged blackbirds are among North America's most abundant birds, with somewhere between 100 million and 200 million nationwide, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y. Rowe said Tuesday that between 4,000 and 5,000 birds had died in Beebe. That's up from initial estimates of 3,000, she said, because hungry cats and dogs likely snatched up lots of carcasses overnight. The Game and Fish Commission shipped carcasses to the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission and the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wis. Researchers at the University of Georgia's wildlife disease study group also asked for a set of birds. A few grackles and a couple of starlings also were among the dead. Those species roost with blackbirds, particularly in winter. "They died from massive trauma," said Game and Fish Commission spokesman Keith Stephens, citing a report from the state poultry lab where the birds were examined. Residents heard loud fireworks just before the birds started hitting the ground. "They started going crazy, flying into one another," Stephens said. The area where the birds fell is too large to determine if any specific blast roused the birds, Police Chief Wayne Ballew said. "It was New Year's Eve night. Everybody and their brother was shooting fireworks," the chief said. The city allows fireworks only on New Year's Eve and Independence Day. Bad weather has been blamed for earlier bird kills in Arkansas. In 2001, lightning killed dozens of mallards at Hot Springs, and a flock of dead pelicans was found in the woods about 10 years ago, Rowe said. Lab tests showed they, too, had been hit by lightning. In 1973, hail knocked birds from the sky at Stuttgart, Ark., on the day before hunting season. Some of the birds were caught in a violent storm's updrafts and became encased in ice before falling from the sky. Some were described as bowling balls with feathers. Earlier Friday, a tornado had killed three people in Cincinnati, Ark., about 150 miles away, but most of the bad weather had passed Beebe when the birds died. Rowe initially said poisoning was possible, but unlikely. Birds of prey and other animals, including dogs and cats, ate several of the dead birds and suffered no ill effects. "Every dog and cat in the neighborhood that night was able to get a fresh snack," Rowe said.

January 6, 2011

Thousands of menhaden have washed up on Folly Beach on the South Carolina coast, and an official said they were apparently killed by cold weather. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources biologist Phil Maier estimated about 10,000 fish washed up Thursday on the island southwest of Charleston. Maier said the fish generally school in groups of 100,000 or more so the kill was relatively small. The fish are about 6 inches long. Maier said the fish may have gotten stuck behind a bar in shallow water where the water was colder. There were no reports of kills on other area beaches. Maier said the sea temperatures along the coast are about 48 degrees. He said when they drop to 47, they can affect the survival of shrimp and other species.

January 7, 2011

FOX Carolina chief meteorologist Kendra Kent said Friday that a major winter storm could target the Upstate on Monday. Kent said that most of the weekend in the Upstate will be chilly, but precipitation free. In the mountains,

heavy snow is possible along the North Carolina-Tennessee border through Saturday night. On Sunday, clouds will increase and sleet or snow will develop from west to east beginning about 9 p.m., Kent said. Kent said that overnight Sunday into Monday morning the snow will pick up and become heavy. She said there is a possibility that sleet and rain will mix in with the snow at times. As far as amounts precipitation amounts, Kent said it is still too early for forecasters to be certain. She said that 4 to 6 inches of snow is possible for much of the area with the upcoming storm. Kent said that the track of the storm system and the amount of cold air and moisture that is present will play a huge role in the amount of snow that will fall. On Tuesday, the skies will begin to clear for much of the area, Kent said. She said that snow will continue along the North Carolina-Tennessee border through Wednesday. Residents should prepare over the weekend for major travel effects early next week, Kent said.

January 8, 2011

The snow hasn't started falling yet in the Upstate, but South Carolina Department of Transportation crews were already on standby on Friday. Workers have plow [trucks](#) lined up and ready to go, and all of the sand stockpiles are topped off, ready for the storm. Crews pretreated roads with a salt and brine solution and hit what they call some problem spots in certain areas. Jason Allison, district maintenance engineer with the DOT, said they are watching closely as the storm system prepares to move into the area late Sunday night. "I've got 60 some odd employees in each of Oconee and Pickens. We've got 70 to 80 employees in Greenville, and then we've got around 90 in Spartanburg, so we'll be dividing each one of them in half to work 12-hour shifts." Workers will start 12-hour shifts on Sunday.

January 8, 2011

Driving instructor Mike Renner spends his days teaching people not only how to drive, but how to do it in hazardous conditions. "I have people ask me all the time, 'How do I drive on ice?' I tell them you don't. If it's truly ice, it doesn't matter if you have [four-wheel drive](#) or whatever. You don't have the grip, and without grip, you don't have steering and you become a passenger." Since the Upstate and Mountains are expecting hazardous driving conditions Monday, Renner has some tips on what to do if you hit an icy patch. If you lose grip on the front tires, don't make the mistake of turning the wheel too much. "If you've lost some grip and you lose the ability to steer the [car](#); you put more angle to the car it makes it worse." Renner said. He said the main thing you want to do is reduce your speed slowly and hold tight to the wheel when you lose grip in the front. But if you lose grip in the back, it's a totally different procedure. "You have to steer into it, pause and then we recover. So you steer into the slide. Be careful not to get off the gas too quickly. Wait for grip to come back, steer back again," Renner said. And Renner said the biggest tip is to stay off the road. And if you have to drive, watch your speed.

January 11, 2011

Monday's winter storm is still causing problems on area roads, prompting troopers to urge drivers to stay off the roads. The South Carolina Department of Transportation said that all interstates are open in Greenville, Spartanburg and Anderson counties. The agency said that crews are now beginning to concentrate on primary and high-volume secondary roads. As of 1 p.m., 1,151 people were working to clear the roads across the state, SCDOT said. The agency said crews have spread 15,276 tons of salt, 5,699 tons of sand and 699,308 gallons of brine on roads across the Palmetto State. More than 750 pieces of equipment were in use, the agency said. Troopers in the Carolinas asked that drivers stay off the roads until plow crews are able to begin concentrating on the primary and secondary roads. Most county offices were closed Tuesday. Both Haywood and Anderson malls said the businesses will open at noon. Duke Energy reported spotty power outages on Tuesday morning. Progress Energy reported no outages in the Asheville area. Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative also said there were no outages on its system Tuesday morning. The United States Postal Service said that mail carriers are attempting to make their normal deliveries, but they are instructed not to deliver in unsafe conditions, which covers many places. The agency said that carriers will make their normal deliveries as soon as possible.

January 14, 2011

Crews working to clear snow and ice from area roads following Monday's snowstorm hope warmer air will make their job easier. Jason Allison, who works for the South Carolina [Department of Transportation](#), said his crews have been working around the clock since the storm, but that the freezing temperatures have made clearing the roads an uphill battle. "The temperatures haven't completely agreed with the melting, but we're getting closer," Allison said. "With this snowfall, we've had a lot more than normal, and the ice on top of it and the traffic has packed it all down." Allison said that the melting that happens during the day refreezes at night, making the roads slippery once again. "Once it gets frozen, you can't get it off until it gets into a slushy state," Allison said. "There are only two ways to do that -- with temperature or chemicals, like salt, brine or calcium chloride." [Small businesses](#) have also been busy helping with snow and ice removal. Scott Callaway, of Callaway Aquatics, said his crews have been across the Upstate this week, clearing as many parking lots and roads as possible. "It's easier to do it as soon as possible before it turns to ice, but salt helps a lot," Callaway said. Allison said that crews will stay on 12-hour shifts until they can get most of the roads cleared or treated. He said in the meantime, drivers must exercise caution. "Just be aware of your surroundings," Allison said. "Be aware of where you are. Pay attention. You may be on a roadway that's dry for two to three miles. Keep in mind there's still going to be those shady spots that could cause you problems." The forecast calls for high temperatures to rise into the 50s by Sunday. Overnight lows are forecast to slowly climb above freezing by early next week.

January 19, 2011

Firefighters said three workers suffered burns during a fire at a Spartanburg plant Wednesday morning. The fire happened at the Odermath USA plant at 2751 New Cut Road about 8 a.m. Firefighters said that the workers' injuries were minor. They said the plant manager suffered burns to his head, neck and face. All three workers were taken to a local hospital to be treated. Investigators said that the fire appeared to be the result of a chemical explosion that happened while the victims were working with a metal called ferrotitanium. They said the workers were thrown about 15 feet by the explosion. FOX Carolina's Dan Bubany said that firefighters were concerned that fog in the area may keep toxic fumes close to the ground. He said that emergency workers were testing the air. No evacuation orders had been issued. Metal coils are made at the plant, Bubany said. Ferrotitanium is an alloy of iron and titanium, according to Wikipedia. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest information.

January 24, 2011

Greenville work crews are in the process of replacing some trees along downtown's Main Street. City officials said they are focusing on the 100 and [200](#) blocks of North Main Street, where many of the older trees will be replaced with Allee Elm trees, a more suitable species for the area. Workers will also add some shrubs, city officials said. Some sidewalks will also be replaced during the project, officials said. City leaders said the project should be complete in two or three months.

February 15, 2011

A fire continues to burn at a fertilizer plant in Hartsville, but officials say no injuries have been reported. Firefighters from at least five counties attacked hot spots at the Agrium Rainbow plant early Tuesday. Only a handful of workers were in the plant when the fire started about 7 p.m. Monday and they escaped without injury. Adam Myrick with the Department of Health and Environmental Control said there is no indication of hazardous chemicals in the smoke billowing from the plant. Myrick said the Environmental Protection Agency planned to check water at a lake next to the plant. About 75 people went to a shelter set up by the American Red Cross. The plant employed about 50 workers.

February 15, 2011

A forest fire that started in Polk County near Chimney Rock State Park scorched about 300 acres and spread to nearby Rutherford County by Monday afternoon. The blaze started Saturday near Jude's Gap. David Brown, of the North Carolina Forest Service, said that gusty winds and steep terrain are posing a challenge for the 75 to 80 firefighters who have been working around the clock. He said additional resources will be brought in Tuesday. Brown said a fire line was plowed around the blaze, but the fire jumped the line and spread into neighboring Rutherford County. Firefighters with the Sunnyview Fire Department were posted at the base of the mountain to protect [homes](#) in the area, Brown said. He said there was no immediate threat to the homes, and no evacuations have been ordered. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

February 18, 2011

The Jude's Gap Fire burning near Chimney Rock since Saturday has scorched 1,050 acres as of Thursday afternoon, according to the North Carolina Forest Service. Smoke could be seen billowing over World's Edge Mountain in Polk County Thursday afternoon, while firefighters patrolled hot spots left behind by the blaze. "All the lines that they put in to contain (the fire) are holding at this time," said Sunny View Fire Chief Marty McGuinn. McGuinn said firefighters were able to knock down the flames because crews worked double shifts and many hours to get the fire under control. He said he wants to keep it that way, so he's asking people in town to help. "Clear the leaves off of the [roof](#) and out of gutters," McGuinn said. "Have brush and debris trimmed back away from your home." The fire made its way into Rutherford County earlier this week, and that is where crews are concentrating their efforts. "We've never had a fire this dramatic on this side come down this far," said Deborah Wilson, whose parents live in the area. The blaze on Cane Creek Mountain is just behind their home. "They've watered the [houses](#)," she said. Wilson said when she got to her parents' home she was greeted by the smell of thick smoke, which made breathing difficult. "My mother and father live the farthest in the there," Wilson said as she pointed toward the mountain. "They have actually left for the night." As of Thursday night, the fire was still burning in Rutherford County. Firefighters set a burn-out, which is a part of fire line intentionally set in hopes of smothering the flames for good. "Hopefully they'll go up and burn together and it will put itself out and it will be over with soon," Wilson said. Nearly 200 firefighters from local, state and national departments helped fight the wildfire. As of Thursday night, firefighters said more than 45 percent of the fire had been contained. The Forest Service said the fire could grow to about 1,500 acres before it is fully contained. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

February 21, 2011

Upstate firefighters were kept busy Monday afternoon as crews were called to several brush fires across the area. Forestry officials said that high temperatures, low humidity and high winds have combined to create a high risk of wildfires across the Upstate. The National Weather Service issued a red flag warning for all of the Upstate until 7 p.m. The agency said winds will stay between 15 and 25 mph during the day, and will gust to 35 mph at times. Brush fires had been reported in Simpsonville, Taylors, Greer, Union and Enoree. The South Carolina Forestry Commission said firefighters have responded to 226 brush fires across the Palmetto State this month. Officials said people should compost their brush piles or wait until the western Carolinas receive a soaking rainfall. The Forestry Commission said law enforcement has been advised to strictly enforce the state's outdoor burning laws. They said people will be cited who do not notify firefighters of their burn, which is required by law. To report a wildfire, call 800-777-FIRE.

February 22, 2011

Forestry officials urged residents not to burn Tuesday as forecasters said the fire danger is still high across the Upstate. The National Weather Service said warm air, gusty winds and low humidity will combine to create a increased risk of rapidly spreading fires. The Forestry Commission said Tuesday that firefighters responded to about 300 fires statewide over the long President's Day weekend. Officials said more than half of those fires began as debris burns that got out of control. More than 100 acres burned Monday in Spartanburg County in a fire that officials say started when a tree limb touched a power line. About 50 acres burned Monday afternoon in one of three fires in Lancaster County. Spartanburg County Emergency Manager Doug Bryson said firefighters were

called to 34 blazes across the county on Monday. Firefighters in Lyman said a brush fire there was one of the biggest they have seen in years, scorching nearly 15 acres of mostly dense forest. They said the fire jumped the Highway 292 in two locations and damaged a building. Residents in the area said they nervously watched the blaze as it spread quickly. "It started way over there and I watched it come all the way across the field, over to there to those trees," said Kinsey Knight as he pointed at the scorched land. A church in Greer was also threatened Monday when a brush fire swept through a field along Highway 101. More than 25 firefighters battled the blaze as it quickly moved toward the Livingway Community Church. Even the pastor said he was trying to protect the building. "I had a pitcher of water and I was pouring it on the hot spots," said Pastor Don Elders. "Then I got a shovel, and started beating the flames down that were coming toward the building." The wind eventually worked in crews' favor and turned the fire away from the church, narrowly missing the building's propane tank. Fires were also reported on Simpsonville, Taylors, Union, Campobello and Enoree on Monday. The Forestry Commission said law enforcement has been advised to strictly enforce the state's outdoor burning laws. They said people will be cited who do not notify firefighters of their burn, which is required by law. There is no burning ban, but officials say allowing a fire to get out of control can lead to fines and court costs of \$450 or more. To report a wildfire, call 800-777-FIRE.

March 7, 2011

The badly needed rainfall over the weekend pushed some rivers out of their [banks](#), flooding nearby roads and prompting officials to close them. The French Broad River at Blantyre rose to 17.6 feet Sunday night, the National Weather Service said. Forecasters said the river is expected to crest at 17.8 feet Monday morning and will begin to fall by the evening. Flood stage is 18 feet. Officials closed River Road near H.S. Dalton Road because of water covering the roadway. Forecasters said if the river reaches flood stage, there will be minor flooding of secondary roads near the river. The river will fall below flood stage by Tuesday morning, forecasters said. Minor flooding in low-lying areas in the Upstate were reported, but no road closures were reported Monday morning. Another chance for rain is in the forecast for Wednesday.

March 8, 2011

The National Weather Service has issued a flood watch for much of the area ahead of Wednesday's forecast heavy rainfall. The flood watch was issued for Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg counties in South Carolina; Franklin Hart and Stephens counties in Georgia and all of the North Carolina mountains. The watch is in effect from Wednesday morning through Thursday afternoon. Forecasters said heavy rainfall will move in by Wednesday morning and continue through Thursday before tapering off. Rainfall accumulations of up to 3 inches are possible in many areas. FOX Carolina meteorologist Alexandra Wilson said the heaviest rainfall will move in by Wednesday afternoon. Meteorologists said the soil is already saturated after the rainfall received over the weekend, which has already caused some minor flooding along some rivers. Forecasters urged residents to monitor the forecast for more updates and possible warnings.

March 9, 2011

The National Weather Service has issued a flood watch for much of the area ahead of Wednesday's forecast heavy rainfall. The flood watch was issued for Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg counties in South Carolina; Franklin Hart and Stephens counties in Georgia and all of the North Carolina mountains. The watch is in effect from Wednesday morning through Thursday afternoon. FOX Carolina chief meteorologist Kendra Kent said heavy rainfall will move in by Wednesday morning and continue until Thursday morning before tapering off. Rainfall accumulations of up to 3 inches are possible in many areas, with locally higher amounts possible, she said. Kent said the heaviest rainfall will move in by Wednesday afternoon near rush hour. Meteorologists said the soil is

already saturated after the rainfall received over the weekend, which has already caused some minor flooding along some rivers.

March 11, 2011

A ferocious tsunami unleashed by Japan's biggest recorded earthquake slammed into its eastern coast Friday, killing hundreds of people as it carried away ships, cars and homes, and triggered widespread fires that burned out of control. Hours later, the waves washed ashore on Hawaii and the U.S. West coast, where evacuations were ordered from California to Washington but little damage was reported. The entire Pacific had been put on alert - including coastal areas of South America, Canada and Alaska - but waves were not as bad as expected. In northeastern Japan, the area around a nuclear power plant was evacuated after the reactor's cooling system failed and pressure began building inside. Police said 200 to 300 bodies were found in the northeastern coastal city of Sendai, the city in Miyagi prefecture, or state, closest to the epicenter. But authorities said they weren't able to reach the area because of damage to the roads. A police official, who declined to be named because of department policy, said it may be a while before rescuers could reach the area to get more precise body count. So far, they have confirmed 178 were killed, with 584 missing. Police also said 947 people were injured. The magnitude-8.9 offshore quake triggered a 23-foot (seven-meter) tsunami and was followed for hours by more than 50 aftershocks, many of them more than magnitude 6.0. In the early hours of Saturday, a magnitude-6.7 earthquake struck the central, mountainous part of the country - far from the original quake's epicenter. It was not immediately clear if this latest quake was related to the others. Friday's massive quake shook dozens of cities and villages along a 1,300-mile (2,100-kilometer) stretch of coast, including Tokyo, hundreds of miles (kilometers) from the epicenter. A large section of Kesennuma, a town of 70,000 people in Miyagi, burned furiously into the night with no apparent hope of being extinguished, public broadcaster NHK said. Koto Fujikawa, 28, was riding a monorail when the quake hit and had to pick her way along narrow, elevated tracks to the nearest station. "I thought I was going to die," Fujikawa, who works for a marketing company, said. "It felt like the whole structure was collapsing." Scientists said the quake ranked as the fifth-largest earthquake in the world since 1900 and was nearly 8,000 times stronger than one that devastated Christchurch, New Zealand, last month. "The energy radiated by this quake is nearly equal to one month's worth of energy consumption" in the United States, U.S. Geological Survey Scientist Brian Atwater told The Associated Press. President Barack Obama pledged U.S. assistance following what he called a potentially "catastrophic" disaster. He said one U.S. aircraft carrier is already in Japan, and a second is on its way. A U.S. ship was also heading to the Marianas Islands to assist as needed, he added. An American man working at one of the nuclear plants near the coast when the quake hit said the whole building shook and debris fell from the ceiling. Danny Eudy, 52, a technician employed by Pasedena, Texas-based Atlantic Plant Maintenance, and his colleagues escaped the building just as the tsunami hit, his wife told The Associated Press. "He walked through so much glass that his feet were cut. It slowed him down," said Pineville, Louisiana, resident Janie Eudy, who spoke to her husband by phone after the quake. The group watched homes and vehicles be carried away in the wave and found their hotel mostly swept away when they finally reached it. The government later ordered about 3,000 residents near that plant - in the city of Onahama - to move back at least two miles (three kilometers) from the plant. The reactor was not leaking radiation but its core remained hot even after a shutdown. The plant is 170 miles (270 kilometers) northeast of Tokyo. Japan's nuclear safety agency said pressure inside the reactor at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant has risen to 1.5 times the level considered normal, and slightly radioactive vapor may be released to reduce the pressure. The Defense Ministry said it had sent dozens of troops trained to deal with chemical disasters to the plant in case of a radiation leak. Trouble was reported at two other nuclear plants, but there was no radiation leak at either of them. Prime Minister Naoto Kan planned to hold an emergency Cabinet meeting early Saturday morning and then take a helicopter to the quake-hit area and the troubled nuclear power plants. Japan's coast guard said it was searching for 80 dock workers on a ship that was swept away from a shipyard in Miyagi. Even for a country used to earthquakes, this one was of horrific proportions because of the tsunami that crashed ashore, swallowing everything in its path as it surged several miles (kilometers) inland before retreating. The apocalyptic images on Japanese TV of powerful, debris-filled waves, uncontrolled fires and a ship caught in a massive whirlpool resembled scenes from a Hollywood disaster movie. Large fishing boats and other vessels rode high waves ashore, slamming against overpasses or scraping under them and snapping power lines along the way. Upright and partially submerged cars

bobbed in the water. Ships anchored in ports crashed against each other. At least two trains were swept off their tracks along the coast, but no one was hurt, though five passengers from one train scrambled to the roof of a nearby house. The tsunami roared over embankments, washing anything in its path inland before reversing directions and carrying the cars, homes and other debris out to sea. Flames shot from some of the homes, probably because of burst gas pipes. Waves of muddy waters flowed over farmland near Sendai, carrying buildings, some of them ablaze. Drivers attempted to flee. Sendai airport was inundated with thick, muddy debris that included cars, trucks, buses and even light planes. Highways to the worst-hit coastal areas buckled. Telephone lines snapped. Train service in northeastern Japan and in Tokyo, which normally serve 10 million people a day, were suspended, leaving untold numbers stranded in stations or roaming the streets. Tokyo's Narita airport was closed indefinitely. In one town alone on the northeastern coast, Minami-soma, some 1,800 houses were destroyed or badly ravaged, a Defense Ministry spokeswoman said. As night fell and temperatures hovered just above freezing, tens of thousands of people remained stranded in Tokyo, where the rail network was still down. The streets were jammed with cars, buses and trucks trying to get out of the city. The city set up 33 shelters in city hall, on university campuses and in government offices, but many planned to spend the night at 24-hour cafes, hotels and offices. Japanese automakers Toyota, Nissan and Honda halted production at some assembly plants in areas hit by the quake. One worker was killed and more than 30 injured after being crushed by a collapsing wall at a Honda Motor Co. research facility in northeastern Tochigi prefecture, the company said. Jesse Johnson, a native of the U.S. state of Nevada who lives in Chiba, north of Tokyo, was eating at a sushi restaurant with his wife when the quake hit. "At first it didn't feel unusual, but then it went on and on. So I got myself and my wife under the table," he told The Associated Press. "I've lived in Japan for 10 years, and I've never felt anything like this before. The aftershocks keep coming. It's gotten to the point where I don't know whether it's me shaking or an earthquake." NHK said more than 4 million buildings were without power in Tokyo and its suburbs. A large fire erupted at the Cosmo oil refinery in the city of Ichihara and burned out of control with 100-foot (30-meter) flames whipping into the sky. "Our initial assessment indicates that there has already been enormous damage," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said. "We will make maximum relief effort based on that assessment." He said the Defense Ministry was sending troops to the hardest-hit region. A utility aircraft and several helicopters were on the way. Also in Miyagi prefecture, a fire broke out in a turbine building of a nuclear power plant, but it was later extinguished, said Tohoku Electric Power Co. A reactor area of a nearby plant was leaking water, the company said. But it was unclear if the leak was caused by the tsunami or something else. There were no reports of radioactive leaks at any of Japan's nuclear plants. Jefferies International Ltd., a global investment banking group, estimated overall losses of about \$10 billion. Hiroshi Sato, a disaster management official in northern Iwate prefecture, said officials were having trouble getting an overall picture of the destruction. "We don't even know the extent of damage. Roads were badly damaged and cut off as tsunami washed away debris, cars and many other things," he said. The U.S. Geological Survey said the 2:46 p.m. quake was magnitude 8.9, the biggest to hit Japan since record-keeping began in the late 1800s and one of the biggest ever recorded in the world. The quake struck at a depth of six miles (10 kilometers), about 80 miles (125 kilometers) off the eastern coast, the agency said. The area is 240 miles (380 kilometers) northeast of Tokyo. Several quakes hit the same region in recent days, including one measured at magnitude 7.3 on Wednesday that caused no damage. A tsunami warning was extended to a number of areas in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Latin America, including Japan, Russia, Indonesia, New Zealand and Chile. In the Philippines, authorities ordered an evacuation of coastal communities, but no unusual waves were reported. Thousands fled homes in Indonesia after officials warned of a tsunami up to 6 feet (2 meters) high, but waves of only 4 inches (10 centimeters) were measured. No big waves came to the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory, either. The first waves hit Hawaii about 9 a.m. EST (1400 GMT). A tsunami about 7 feet (2.1 meters) high was recorded on Maui and a wave at least 3 feet (a meter) high was recorded on Oahu and Kauai. Officials warned that the waves would continue and could get larger. Japan's worst previous quake was a magnitude 8.3 temblor in 1923 in Kanto that killed 143,000 people, according to USGS. A 7.2-magnitude quake in Kobe in 1995 killed 6,400 people. Japan lies on the "Ring of Fire" - an arc of earthquake and volcanic zones stretching around the Pacific where about 90 percent of the world's quakes occur, including the one that triggered the Dec. 26, 2004, Indian Ocean tsunami that killed an estimated 230,000 people in 12 nations. A magnitude-8.8 temblor that shook central Chile in February 2010 also generated a tsunami and killed 524 people.

March 11, 2011

Clemson University said eight students were in Japan when Friday's earthquake struck. A magnitude 8.9 earthquake shook the island nation just before 1 a.m. Eastern time. The offshore quake unleashed a 23-foot tsunami and was followed for hours by more than 50 aftershocks, many of them of more than magnitude 6.0. Police said 200 to 300 bodies were found in the northeastern coastal city of Sendai, the city in Miyagi prefecture, or state, closest to the epicenter. Another 137 were confirmed killed, with 531 people missing. Police also said 627 people were injured. On Friday morning, Clemson officials said they have been able to reach seven of the eight international studies students. They said because of the time difference it may take time to reach the remaining student. They said none of the eight students were in the quake zone. Converse College, Wofford College and Bob Jones University said they do not believe they have any students in Japan right now. A call to Furman University was not immediately returned.

March 28, 2011

Electric utilities in North Carolina and South Carolina reported they have detected trace radiation from Japan's nuclear reactor accidents that followed an earthquake and tsunami. Progress Energy and Duke Energy in North Carolina and South Carolina Electric and Gas Co. all operate nuclear plants and said they have detected trace amounts of radiation. Nuclear experts and health officials said there is no public health risk. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said people are exposed to much more radiation on an international airline flight. Progress Energy, of Raleigh, said it picked up very low levels of iodine-131, a radioactive byproduct of nuclear fission, at its Robinson nuclear plant in South Carolina and a Florida plant. The company expects to detect similar levels near Raleigh and Wilmington this week.

March 28, 2011

Workers discovered new pools of radioactive water leaking from Japan's crippled nuclear complex, officials said Monday, as emergency crews struggled to pump out hundreds of tons of contaminated water and bring the plant back under control. Officials believe the contaminated water has sent radioactivity levels soaring at the coastal complex and caused more radiation to seep into soil and seawater. Crews also found traces of plutonium in the soil outside of the complex on Monday, but officials insisted there was no threat to public health. Plutonium - a key ingredient in nuclear weapons - is present in the fuel at the complex, which has been leaking radiation for over two weeks, so experts had expected some to be found once crews began searching for evidence of it this week. Tokyo Electric Power Co. official Jun Tsuruoka said only two of the plutonium samples taken Monday were from the leaking reactors. The other three were from earlier nuclear tests. Years of weapons testing in the atmosphere left trace amounts of plutonium in many places around the world. The Fukushima Dai-ichi power plant, 140 miles (220 kilometers) northeast of Tokyo, was crippled March 11 when a tsunami spawned by a powerful earthquake slammed into Japan's northeastern coast. The huge wave engulfed much of the complex, and destroyed the crucial power systems needed to cool the complex's nuclear fuel rods. Since then, three of the complex's six units are believed to have partially melted down, and emergency crews have struggled with everything from malfunctioning pumps to dangerous spikes in radiation that have forced temporary evacuations. Confusion at the plant has intensified fears that the nuclear crisis will last weeks, months or years amid alarms over radiation making its way into produce, raw milk and even tap water as far away as Tokyo. The troubles at the Fukushima complex have eclipsed Pennsylvania's 1979 crisis at Three Mile Island, when a partial meltdown raised fears of widespread radiation release, but is still well short of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, which killed at least 31 people with radiation sickness, raised long-term cancer rates, and spewed radiation across much of the northern hemisphere. While parts of the Japanese plant has been reconnected to the power grid, the contaminated water - which has now been found in numerous places around the complex, including the basements of several buildings - must be pumped out before electricity can be restored to the cooling system. That has left officials struggling with two sometimes-contradictory efforts: pumping in water to keep the fuel rods cool and pumping out - and then safely storing - contaminated water. Hidehiko Nishiyama, a spokesman for Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, called that balance "very

delicate work." He also said workers were still looking for safe ways to store the radioactive water. "We are exploring all means," he said. The buildup of radioactive water first became a problem last week, when it splashed over the boots of two workers, burning them and prompting a temporary suspension of work. Then on Monday, officials with Tokyo Electric Power Co., which owns and runs the complex, said that workers had found more radioactive water in deep trenches used for pipes and electrical wiring outside three units. The contaminated water has been emitting radiation exposures more than four times the amount that the government considers safe for workers. The five workers in the area at the time were not hurt, said TEPCO spokesman Takashi Kurita. Exactly where the water is coming from remains unclear, though many suspect it is cooling water that has leaked from one of the disabled reactors. It could take weeks to pump out the radioactive water, said Gary Was, a nuclear engineering professor at the University of Michigan. "Battling the contamination so workers can work there is going to be an ongoing problem," he said. Meanwhile, new readings showed ocean contamination had spread about a mile (1.6 kilometers) farther north of the nuclear site than before but is still within the 12-mile (20-kilometer) radius of the evacuation zone. Radioactive iodine-131 was discovered offshore at a level 1,150 times higher than normal, Nishiyama, a spokesman for the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, told reporters. Amid reports that people had been sneaking back into the mandatory evacuation zone around the nuclear complex, the chief government spokesman again urged residents to stay out. Yukio Edano said contaminants posed a "big" health risk in that area. Gregory Jaczko, head of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, arrived in Tokyo on Monday to meet with Japanese officials and discuss the situation, the U.S. Embassy said in a statement. "The unprecedented challenge before us remains serious, and our best experts remain fully engaged to help Japan," Jaczko was quoted as saying. Early Monday, a strong earthquake shook the northeastern coast and prompted a brief tsunami alert. The quake was measured at magnitude 6.5, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. No damage or injuries were reported. Scores of earthquakes have rattled the country over the past two weeks, adding to the sense of unease across Japan, where the final death toll is expected to top 18,000 people, with hundreds of thousands still homeless. TEPCO officials said Sunday that radiation in leaking water in Unit 2 was 10 million times above normal - a report that sent employees fleeing. But the day ended with officials saying that figure had been miscalculated and the level was actually 100,000 times above normal, still very high but far better than the earlier results. "This sort of mistake is not something that can be forgiven," Edano said sternly Monday.

March 30, 2011

Wednesday started out stormy for the western Carolinas and northeast Georgia, and forecasters said it was the beginning of a rainy few days. Heavy rain, thunder and lightning knocked out power for some people and made the commute slick for everyone Wednesday morning. According to Duke Energy's website, nearly 10,000 customers were without power early Wednesday morning. That number shrank to just more than 3,500 customers by 10 a.m. A majority of the outages were in Macon County, N.C. According to the South Carolina Highway Patrol, the rain caused a few crashes during the morning commute, but none of them appeared to be serious. Meteorologist Alexandra Wilson said scattered showers were possible through Friday. Otherwise, cloudy and cool conditions were expected, she said. Scattered snow showers could develop in the highest elevations of the mountains by Friday night, she said. Sunshine returns in time for the weekend, with temperatures near 70 degrees in the Upstate and the middle 60s for the mountains, Wilson said.

Attachments



Government

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM OR NEED
FIRST QUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **GOVERNMENT**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
Sundays	10:00 am	FOX NEWS SUNDAY

Description:

Fox News Sunday is a national weekly program with current events and political issues. (60:00)

January 4, 2011

South Carolina Gov.-elect Nikki Haley has chosen an adviser to Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal to run the Health and Human Services Department in her fifth Cabinet announcement. Haley said Tuesday that Anthony Keck is her choice to lead the agency responsible for administering federal health care programs for the poor and the elderly. In the past month, Haley has named her picks to lead the state departments of commerce, labor, juvenile justice and corrections. They are among 15 Cabinet agencies overseen by the governor. The governor-elect will be sworn in next week. Last month, Revenue Department director Ray Stevens said he is resigning to take a job at a law firm. His replacement has yet to be announced. All of Haley's Cabinet nominees must be confirmed by the state Senate.

January 6, 2011

Legislative leaders in South Carolina said [tax increases](#) are out of the question as they look to fill an \$800 million budget gap. Republican House and Senate leaders said Thursday they know the impending cuts will be painful for people across the state, and that no agency will be spared. Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler, of Gaffney, said voters clearly said in November that they're taxed enough. Legislators could give few specific examples of what they could cut. Yet, Republicans would not rule out further [tax cuts](#). Gov.-elect Nikki Haley campaigned on eliminating the state's corporate income tax. Democratic Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter said doing so would be fiscally irresponsible. But Peeler said Haley's win shows her ideas can't be discounted.

January 6, 2011

South Carolina's first female and minority governor has chosen the first minority member of her cabinet. Gov.-elect Nikki Haley on Thursday announced the selection of 59-year-old Lynne Rogers to run the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services. Rogers is an African-American woman who has been deputy director of the state Labor Department. She's also a former Richland County prosecutor. She is Haley's seventh cabinet pick. Haley said she wants to merge the probation agency with corrections and juvenile justice. She said Bill Byars, her pick for corrections, would lead the coalition. Proponents said the merger will save [money](#) and better coordinate oversight of offenders so that fewer people return to prison. Haley's nominees must be confirmed by the Senate. Haley takes over for Gov. Mark Sanford on Wednesday.

January 7, 2011

The executive director of South Carolina's [financial](#) oversight board has resigned. Frank Fusco's office confirmed Friday that his last day as director of the Budget and Control Board will be Jan. 14. Fusco has run the board since 2001. The panel oversees day-to-day management of much of the state's bureaucracy. Fusco's resignation comes as Gov.-elect Nikki Haley prepares to take office Wednesday. It's not the first time Fusco has resigned. He stepped down in January 2007 after Gov. Mark Sanford wanted to replace Fusco with Henry White. White left in August 2007 and Fusco was rehired after a member of the Budget and Control Board, then-state Treasurer Thomas Ravenel, resigned after being indicted on federal cocaine charges.

January 11, 2011

The South Carolina Senate opened the 2011 General Assembly and quickly recessed because snow and ice had kept too many members away. The storms made roads and the Capitol grounds hazardous, and only 20 of the Senate's 45 members made it to the Statehouse for the session opening just after noon Tuesday. Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell said there weren't enough members to do the basics of electing officers and sending bills to committees. Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer opened his last Senate session. He leaves office Wednesday when Lt. Gov.-elect Ken Ard takes the oath of office. The House delayed even trying to start its session until later in the day.

January 12, 2011

South Carolina's new governor said the state must cut taxes and trim the size of government to turn around its lagging economy. In remarks prepared for her inaugural address Wednesday, Nikki Haley invoked the state's fierce spirit of independence during the Revolutionary War and blamed misguided federal aid for helping to ruin the state budget. Haley also said state spending must become [more efficient](#) and called for improvements to education. While vague on details, her speech hinted at allowing children to attend school outside their home districts. The Republican also renewed her call for lawmakers to record all of their votes on legislation. Haley took the oath Wednesday to become South Carolina's 117th governor and the first woman and minority to run the state. A state law officer at the inauguration collapsed during the procession of dignitaries down the Statehouse steps. The identity of the person was not immediately clear. Emergency medical workers responded and removed the officer on a stretcher from the stage where Haley is to take the oath of office. The ceremony was interrupted for about 15 minutes. It resumed with the announcer asking for a moment of silence, followed by a statement that the Bureau of Protective Services officer will be OK. Also taking office Wednesday was Lt. Gov. Ken Ard, Secretary of State Mark Hammond, Treasurer Curtis Loftis, Attorney General Alan Wilson, Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom, Superintendent of [Education](#) Mitch Zais and Adjutant General Robert Livingston Jr. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers was also sworn in again. Legislators began their new session on Tuesday, but quickly recessed. Only 20 of the 45 senators were able to make it to the statehouse because of the inclement weather.

January 12, 2011

Inaugural attendees said they came to Columbia to watch Nikki Haley step into history as South Carolina's first female and first minority governor. The crowd withstood temperatures that hovered at freezing Wednesday to see Haley take the oath of office. Isle of Palms resident Kae Childs said she brought her 12- and 8-year-old granddaughters from Greenville to be part of the event, which they described as "awesome." Nareem Banik, of Charleston, said he and his wife came to their first inaugural to see an Indian-American become the state's chief executive. The neuroscientist said Haley's win means anyone in America can achieve their dreams. Though Haley has eschewed the historical nature of her election, she publicly thanked her mother and noted the difficulties she faced as a woman in India. South Carolina's new governor said the state must cut taxes and trim the size of government to turn around its lagging economy. In remarks prepared for her inaugural address Wednesday, Nikki Haley invoked the state's fierce spirit of independence during the Revolutionary War and blamed misguided federal aid for helping to ruin the state budget. Haley also said state spending must become more efficient and called for improvements to education. While vague on details, her speech hinted at allowing children to attend school outside their home districts. The Republican also renewed her call for lawmakers to record all of their votes on legislation. Haley took the oath Wednesday to become South Carolina's 117th governor and the first woman and minority to run the state. A state law officer at the inauguration collapsed during the procession of dignitaries down the Statehouse steps. The identity of the person was not immediately clear. Emergency medical workers responded and removed the officer on a stretcher from the stage where Haley is to take the oath of office. The ceremony was interrupted for about 15 minutes. It resumed with the announcer asking for a moment of silence, followed by a statement that the Bureau of Protective Services officer will be OK. Also taking office Wednesday was Lt. Gov. Ken Ard, Secretary of State Mark Hammond, Treasurer Curtis Loftis, Attorney General Alan Wilson, Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom, Superintendent of Education Mitch Zais and Adjutant General Robert Livingston Jr. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers was also sworn in again. Legislators began their new session on Tuesday, but quickly recessed. Only 20 of the 45 senators were able to make it to the statehouse because of the inclement weather.

January 13, 2011

Residents and businesses that have alarm systems need to start taking measures to cut down on false alarms, or they could face fines. Greenville will be reviewing a new ordinance Friday to reduce the number of false alarms. The new rule would cut the

number of warnings residents and businesses receive about their alarm systems from 12 a year to three. Police Chief Terri Wilfong said 98 percent of alarms that are triggered are false. She said the goal of the new ordinance is to get alarm companies and people who use them to be more responsible, which will free up officers to respond to more important calls. Wilfong said the significant drop in warnings may seem alarming but they are willing to work with alarm system owners. "For example, if there's a problem with the alarm and the alarm company sends us a letter saying there's an issue, we will void the fine if one is issued," Wilfong said. If it passes, the ordinance will impose a fine of \$50 for the fourth time officer are called to the location for a false alarm. The fines would go up each time a false alarm is sounded. City Council will vote on a first reading of the proposed rule Friday afternoon. If approved it will move to a second reading in a few weeks.

January 25, 2011

The ledger did not appear to be adding up Tuesday night when President Barack Obama urged more spending on one hand and a spending freeze on the other. Obama spoke ambitiously of putting money into roads, research, education, efficient cars, high-speed rail and other initiatives in his State of the Union speech. He pointed to the transportation and construction projects of the last two years and proposed "we redouble these efforts." He coupled this with a call to "freeze annual domestic spending for the next five years." But Obama offered far more examples of where he would spend than where he would cut, and some of the areas he identified for savings are not certain to yield much if anything. For example, he said he wants to eliminate "billions in taxpayer dollars we currently give to oil companies." Yet he made a similar proposal last year that went nowhere. He sought \$36.5 billion in tax increases on oil and gas companies over the next decade, but Congress largely ignored the request, even though Democrats were then in charge of both houses of Congress.

A look at some of Obama's statements Tuesday night and how they compare with the facts:

OBAMA: Tackling the deficit "means further reducing health care costs, including programs like Medicare and Medicaid, which are the single biggest contributor to our long-term deficit. Health insurance reform will slow these rising costs, which is part of why nonpartisan economists have said that repealing the health care law would add a quarter of a trillion dollars to our deficit."

THE FACTS: The idea that Obama's health care law saves money for the government is based on some arguable assumptions. To be sure, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated the law will slightly reduce red ink over 10 years. But the office's analysis assumes that steep cuts in Medicare spending, as called for in the law, will actually take place. Others in the government have concluded it is unrealistic to expect such savings from Medicare. In recent years, for example, Congress has repeatedly overridden a law that would save the treasury billions by cutting deeply into Medicare pay for doctors. Just last month, the government once again put off the scheduled cuts for another year, at a cost of \$19 billion. That money is being taken out of the health care overhaul. Congress has shown itself sensitive to pressure from seniors and their doctors, and there's little reason to think that will change.

OBAMA: Vowed to veto any bills sent to him that include "earmarks," pet spending provisions pushed by individual lawmakers. "Both parties in Congress should know this: If a bill comes to my desk with earmarks inside, I will veto it."

THE FACTS: House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, has promised that no bill with earmarks will be sent to Obama in the first place. Republicans have taken the lead in battling earmarks while Obama signed plenty of earmark-laden spending bills when Democrats controlled both houses. As recently as last month, Obama was prepared to sign a catchall spending measure stuffed with earmarks, before it collapsed in the Senate after an outcry from conservatives over the bill's \$8 billion-plus in home-state pet projects. It's a turnabout for the president; in early 2009, Obama sounded like an apologist for the practice: "Done right, earmarks have given legislators the opportunity to direct federal money to worthy projects that benefit people in their districts, and that's why I've opposed their outright elimination," he said then.

OBAMA: "I'm willing to look at other ideas to bring down costs, including one that Republicans suggested last year: medical malpractice reform to rein in frivolous lawsuits."

THE FACTS: Republicans may be forgiven if this offer makes them feel like Charlie Brown running up to kick the football, only to have it pulled away, again. Obama has expressed openness before to this prominent Republican proposal, but it has not come to much. It was one of several GOP ideas that were dropped or diminished in the health care law after Obama endorsed them in a televised bipartisan meeting at the height of the debate. Republicans want federal action to limit jury awards in medical malpractice cases; what Obama appears to be offering, by supporting state efforts, falls short of that. The president has said he agrees that fear of being sued leads to unnecessary tests and procedures that drive up health care costs. So far the administration has provided grants to test ideas aimed at reducing medical mistakes and resolving malpractice cases by negotiation, but has recommended no change in federal law. Trial lawyers, major political donors to Democratic candidates, are strongly opposed to caps on jury awards. But the administration has been reluctant to support other approaches, such as the

creation of specialized courts where expert judges, not juries, would decide malpractice cases. In October 2009 the Congressional Budget Office estimated that government health care programs could save \$41 billion over 10 years if nationwide limits on jury awards for pain and suffering and other similar curbs were enacted.

OBAMA: "The bipartisan Fiscal Commission I created last year made this crystal clear. I don't agree with all their proposals, but they made important progress. And their conclusion is that the only way to tackle our deficit is to cut excessive spending wherever we find it - in domestic spending, defense spending, health care spending, and spending through tax breaks and loopholes."

THE FACTS: Obama's fiscal commission did not simply recommend cutting excessive spending; it proposed that the deficit could only be tamed by cutting \$3 for every \$1 of new revenue raised - in other words, a painful mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Instead, Obama proposed an overhaul of the corporate tax system that would eliminate loopholes and tax breaks but also reduce tax rates. The net effect would be neutral; it would not reduce or raise any revenue. Obama has yet to sign on to any of the ideas, even though he promised when creating the panel that it would not be "one of those Washington gimmicks."

OBAMA: "To put us on solid ground, we should also find a bipartisan solution to strengthen Social Security for future generations."

THE FACTS: With that comment, Obama missed another chance to embrace the tough medicine proposed by the commission for bringing down the deficit. For example, he ruled out slashing benefits or partially privatizing the program, and made no reference to raising the retirement age. That left listeners to guess how he plans to do anything to salvage the popular retirement program whose trust funds are expected to run out of money in 2037 without changes.

OBAMA: As testament to the fruits of his administration's diplomatic efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons, he said the Iranian government "faces tougher and tighter sanctions than ever before." THE FACTS: That is true, and it reflects Obama's promise one year ago that Iran would face "growing consequences" if it failed to heed international demands to constrain its nuclear program. But what Obama didn't say was that U.S. diplomacy has failed to persuade Tehran to negotiate over U.N. demands that it take steps to prove it is not on the path toward a bomb. Preliminary talks with Iran earlier this month broke off after the Iranians demanded U.S. sanctions be lifted.

Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, giving the GOP response: "Whether sold as 'stimulus' or repackaged as 'investment,' their actions show they want a federal government that controls too much, taxes too much and spends too much in order to do too much."

THE FACTS: The economic stimulus package passed by the Democratic-controlled Congress in February 2009 didn't raise taxes. Instead, about a third of the package - nearly \$300 billion - was made up of temporary tax cuts. The biggest was Obama's Making Work Pay credit, which provided up \$400 to individuals and \$800 to married couples. There were dozens of other tax cuts, including a more generous child tax credit, a tax credit for buying a home and a sales tax deduction for buying a car. Many, but not all, of the tax cuts have since expired. Obama's health care law imposed new taxes, including a penalty for some people who don't get qualified health insurance, starting in 2014. But Obama extended Bush-era tax cuts that were due to expire at the beginning of the year. He also enacted a new one-year cut in the payroll tax for 2011 for just about every wage earner.

January 27, 2011

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has appointed a Charleston hotel executive to run the state's tourism agency. She's also dealing with concerns from black legislators that her Cabinet doesn't reflect the state's black population. Haley on Wednesday nominated Duane Parrish to run the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department. Parrish is the president of Premier Hospitality Group. Haley's announcement was delayed by about 20 minutes as the governor huddled with members of the Legislative Black Caucus. State Rep. Harold Mitchell, of Spartanburg, is the caucus's chairman-elect and said the group has twice met with Haley on concerns her Cabinet and staff appointments don't reflect the state's 30 percent black population.

January 31, 2011

U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan is back in South Carolina to make several stops in his district. Duncan on Monday will stop at Greenwood Mills Harris Plant for a tour of the facility that specializes in military, home furnishings and industrial woven fabrics. This is Duncan's first trip back to his district since taking office earlier this month. Duncan said a revamped U.S. House work schedule is allowing members to spend more time in their districts while spending the same amount of time at their desks in Washington.

January 31, 2011

Democrats plan to hold their 2012 nominating convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, selecting to fete President Barack Obama in a newly competitive presidential battleground in the conservative-leaning South. The selection signaled that Obama plans to aggressively compete in traditionally Republican states that he won during his first presidential campaign by cobbling together a diverse cross-section of voters. And the apparent theme - The People's Convention - indicated that the president will try to rekindle the grass-roots flavor of his ground-breaking 2008 bid. First Lady Michelle Obama disclosed the selection to campaign supporters in an e-mail Tuesday, another step in the president's recent efforts to ramp up his re-election preparations. She praised Charlotte as one of the fastest-growing cities in the South and "home to [innovative](#), hardworking folks with big hearts and open minds. And of course, great barbecue." She signaled that the gathering would be "a grassroots convention for the people" and promised to finance the convention differently than has been done in the past but provided no specifics on either point. A personally popular incumbent, Obama is virtually assured of being nominated again; he faces no serious primary [challenger](#). In an e-mail to backers, Tim Kaine, the party chairman, answered speculation that Obama would choose a different running mate for 2012, saying the party was looking forward to nominating both Obama and Vice President Joe Biden for a second term. Democrats will hold their convention the week of Sept. 3, 2012. A week earlier, Republicans will nominate their candidate in Tampa, Florida, another important presidential state, after a primary fight to sort out a potentially crowded Republican field.

January 31, 2011

Keeping a dog chained up and unattended may become illegal soon in Greenville County. On Monday, the Public Works subcommittee of the Greenville County Council approved a new "two-hour tethering" ordinance to be brought to the full committee. The rule would mean that dog owners cannot leave their pets chained up and unattended outdoors for more than two hours per day. Mikael Hardy with Pawsitive Effects, a group that builds fences at no cost for dogs they find chained up, said dogs who are unattended are more likely to become pregnant, be attacked by other dogs or attack a child who comes near the chained dog. Hardy told the subcommittee Monday night that the key to the ordinance's success will be the education of the public. That plan calls for six months of public service announcements. Violators of the proposed rule could be charged with animal neglect. A date for a reading of the proposed rule in front of the full committee has not been set.

February 7, 2011

Snow has been piling up in western North Carolina this winter. So have the bills for removing the snow. The Asheville Citizen-Times reported Monday that the state of North Carolina has spent more than \$9 million in snow removal and the treatment of roads in the 17 counties in the western part of the state. That's from a total of \$31 million spent across the state. Local governments have also spent plenty to deal with the roads and remove the snow. Mark Combs with the public works department in Black Mountain said the town will be hurting financially when the next snow storm hits the area. The town has spent more than \$35,000 since Christmas. Asheville has spent more than \$250,000 on snow removal, road treatment and preparing for the next storm. FOX Carolina chief meteorologist Kendra Kent said the western Carolinas could see more snow on Thursday.

February 8, 2011

The Obama administration is proposing short-term relief to states saddled with unemployment insurance debt, coupled with a delayed increase in the income level used to tax employers for the aid to the jobless. The administration plans to include the proposal in its budget plan next week. The plan was described late Monday by a person familiar with the discussions on the condition of anonymity because the budget plan is still being completed. Rising unemployment has placed such a burden on states that 30 of them owe the federal government \$42 billion in money borrowed to meet their unemployment insurance obligations. Three states already have had to raise taxes to begin paying back the money they owe. More than 20 other states likely would have to raise taxes to cover their unemployment insurance debts. Under federal law, such [tax increases](#) are automatic once the money owed reaches a certain level. Under the proposal, the administration would impose a moratorium in 2011 and 2012 on state tax increases and on state interest payments on the debt. In 2014, however, the administration proposes to increase the taxable income level for unemployment insurance from \$7,000 to \$15,000. Under the proposal, the federal unemployment [insurance rate](#) would be adjusted so that the new higher income level would not result in a federal tax increase, the person familiar with the plan said. States, however, could retain their current rates, meaning employers could face higher unemployment insurance taxes beginning in 2014. Though the administration could face criticism for enabling states to increase taxes, the thrust of the administration's argument is that federal taxes would not increase and that the move is fiscally

prudent because the federal government ultimately would be repaid at a faster rate than if it did nothing. The person who described the plan said only 13 of the 30 states that owe the \$42 billion would be expected to repay their share of the money in the next nine years under current conditions. The administration's proposal would allow 15 more states to repay the money, this person said.

February 9, 2011

South Carolina Lt. Gov. Ken Ard has retained a lawyer as the state Ethics [Commission](#) questions Ard's campaign spending and at least one missing campaign finance report. Lawyer Butch Bowers said Tuesday the questions about Ard are routine and the lieutenant governor looks forward to responding. Bowers also said the commission extended the deadline to respond by 10 days to Feb. 25. Ard's campaign [finance](#) report shows he spent nearly \$25,000 since the Nov. 2 election. That included nearly \$1,200 for meals, \$3,000 at a Florence Best Buy store and \$800 at a women's apparel store. Bowers represented Gov. Mark Sanford in a 2009 ethics investigation that resulted in the largest ethics fine in state history. Ard also didn't file a 2008 campaign finance report before his last Florence County Council race.

February 9, 2011

South Carolina's [financial](#) oversight board has agreed to approve a \$100 million bailout for the state's Medicaid agency. The Budget and Control Board on Tuesday agreed to provide less than half the money requested by the state Health and Human Services Department. The five-member panel said the agency should find more ways to cut spending, then come back later if it still needs more money. The agency has said that it would have to stop payments to health care providers in March if it isn't covered. The money will come from the state's reserve [fund](#). The budget board took no action Tuesday on a request from the state's prisons agency to let it run a deficit of \$4.8 million. That agency had previously estimated its deficit at \$7.5 million.

February 22, 2011

People convicted of texting and driving will have to pay \$45 in penalties under legislation that is up for debate in a South Carolina Senate committee. The Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday plans to discuss a measure that requires a \$20 fine plus a \$25 state trauma care fund surcharge if the person is convicted. The fines can be higher after court and other surcharges are added. They could also cost a driver a license point. The measure said police have to have a clear view of what the driver is doing. They also cannot cite drivers who are looking up telephone contacts or dialing phones. Police also would not be allowed to take the phone if they stop the driver or use the violation as a reason to search cars.

February 24, 2011

South Carolina legislators have approved a \$5.2 billion state budget that cuts spending on Medicaid, public schools and [colleges](#). The approval on a voice vote Thursday sends the budget to the [House](#) floor for debate March 15. The measure's approval came after the Department of Health and Human Services slashed \$230 million from an initial request of what it said was needed to keep the state's Medicaid programs running. About \$125 million of that is tied to paying doctors and hospitals less to care for the state's elderly, disabled and poor. Public schools would lose at least \$74 million and colleges more than \$16 million.

February 24, 2011

South Carolina citizens could carry a concealed weapon without a permit under legislation advanced by a [House](#) panel. The measure approved unanimously Thursday by a House Judiciary subcommittee applies to any South Carolina resident at least 21 years old who can legally own a gun. Supporters said law-abiding citizens should be able to protect themselves from criminals who don't respect gun laws. State Law Enforcement Division Chief Reggie Lloyd said he has no problem with the proposal. He said women, especially, need to be able to protect themselves. Other law enforcement [directors](#) said they are concerned about people carrying concealed guns without training. The bill now goes to the full Judiciary Committee.

March 8, 2011

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley prompted groans from a crowd during a town hall meeting in Greenville on Monday night. The Republican governor held the meeting at Greenville Technical College to a standing-room-only assembly, and most of the

talk focused on the economy. One of the issues that got the biggest response was the increase in unemployment [taxes](#). "It's going to keep businesses from coming here because of the tax," said Rick Adams, a local businessman. "It's going to take businesses that are here and they're not going to expand." Some in the crowd asked the governor if the jobless tax could be reduced over time. They said the state expects businesses to make up a shortfall and come up with a surplus in two years, which is too big a burden. "This is one of those years where it's not fun," Haley responded. "I am sorry that you have the taxes, but all of you back there, the reason your taxes went up is because you had a lot of claims." That response prompted disapproving groans and boos from many in the crowd. Haley said [tough](#) decisions had to be made to get the state out of debt. The governor also talked about proposed cuts to Medicaid, streamlining programs and the problem of domestic violence in South Carolina. Haley also said the government should get back to the basics, and should not be funding the arts or public media. She also said South Carolina needs to create its own healthcare plan. The governor will be in the Upstate on Tuesday, as well. She will tour the Canada Center at Clemson University.

March 10, 2011

When people line up to vote, many consider themselves Democrats, Republicans or independents. That could change for primaries, if [South Carolina](#) [Republicans](#) have their way. "The fact that a Democrat or a [Republican](#) can cross party lines and somehow influence the outcome of the voting and the nomination I don't think is fair," said James Farrington, a voter. That is also how state GOP leaders and the Greenville Republican Party feel, too. On Thursday, the groups filed a federal lawsuit to get a law changed, claiming the law on the books now is unconstitutional. "There are eight laws right now that are on the books that we think should be stricken and then the General Assembly would re-define those laws," said Karen Floyd, the State Republican chairwoman. If the law changes, it would mean voters would have to register with a specific party before voting in a primary election. Right now, no one keeps track of party affiliation. No matter what happens with the case, nothing will change how people vote during a general election. Attorney Fletcher Smith represented a group of voters made up of tea party members, independents and members of the Black Caucus. They said they want to leave the process the way it is now. "Now, it looks like the Republicans are setting up a process where they don't want tea party people, independents, blacks, whites, red or yellow, that are not part of the club, to be a part of the political process," Smith said. Voters like Rosie Brooks said voting is what's important despite party lines. "I was raised Republican," Brooks said. "I still consider myself Republican, but I still feel like you should be able to vote for whoever you want to because sometimes you do cross party lines." The Republican Party asked a federal judge to make a decision on the case by March 15.

March 15, 2011

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has lost an initial effort to cut taxpayer funding for the 2012 Republican presidential primary. Legislators on Tuesday debated the \$5 billion state budget and the Republican governor's proposals for cutting up to \$25 million in spending. Haley said taxpayers should not pay for the primary and political parties can raise cash for it on their own. The GOP primary next year is a key contest in the White House race. Republican state Rep. Nathan Ballentine tried to block the use of \$80,000 in leftover state Election Commission cash for the primary. His proposal failed on a 46-69 vote. Republican Rep. Tracey Edge, of North Myrtle Beach, said taxpayers would rather pay for the primary than be embarrassed by one that is poorly run.

March 15, 2011

South Carolina senators are deciding whether to put their rules on roll call voting into state law in hopes of ending discussion on Gov. Nikki Haley's campaign issue. Sen. Larry Martin, of Pickens, said it's a matter of voter perception, even though it would change nothing. The Senate and House already record votes on nearly every bill. Haley made on-the-record voting a key campaign issue. The House and Senate separately passed chamber rules limiting voice votes. But Haley continued criticizing lawmakers, saying it must be state law. Some senators argue such a law would violate the state constitution, which requires each chamber to set its voting rules. They propose asking voters in 2012 to change the constitution. Martin said the public does not understand that and just wants it done.

March 28, 2011

Congress returns to Washington this week under mounting pressure to strike an agreement with President Barack Obama on a bill to fund the government. That's proving difficult enough. Then comes the harder part for House Speaker John Boehner: convincing his many tea party-backed GOP freshmen that the sort of split-the-differences measure Obama could sign isn't a

sellout. Time is running short. Staff-level negotiations last week ran aground, and the principals are going to have to pick up the pace to have any chance of making an April 8 deadline to avoid a partial shutdown of the government. Right now it appears that the shutdown that both sides have sworn to avoid is possible - if not probable. Republicans complain that the White House and Senate Democrats, after hinting of deep spending cuts, have been slow in officially offering them. The frustration boiled over on Friday, with Republicans criticizing Democrats for not presenting significant cuts. An offer a few days earlier had ponied up just another \$10 billion or so, GOP officials said, which prompted House Majority Leader Eric Cantor to accuse Democrats of "negotiating off of the status quo and refusing to offer any sort of serious plan for how to cut spending." The tough rhetoric was matched by volleys from Boehner, R-Ohio, and other House GOP leaders. That prompted Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., to accuse Republicans of blowing up a near agreement on a "top line" of spending cuts that would have likely given Republicans more than half of their \$60 billion-plus in reductions. "After days of positive negotiations, with significant flexibility shown by the speaker, the House Republican leadership is back to agonizing over whether to give in to right-wing demands that they abandon any compromise on their extreme cuts," Schumer said. Democrats also say that House Republicans insist on using House-passed legislation slashing more than \$60 billion from the current-year budget as the starting point for talks, pulling back from an agreement with Boehner's office to work off a baseline essentially set at last year's levels. Boehner appears to be in a no-win situation. Any agreement with Obama is sure to incite a revolt among hard-line tea partiers who want the full roster of cuts and an end to funding for Obama's signature health care law. And social conservatives are adamant that the measure cut off money for Planned Parenthood clinics that provide abortions in addition to the family planning services the government funds. Any attempts to outmuscle Obama with legislation that pleases tea partiers, however, would surely incite a shutdown. "The speaker knows that when it comes to avoiding a shutdown, his problem is with the tea party, not Democrats," Schumer said. Republicans promised last year that they would ratchet spending down to 2008 levels and force Obama to backtrack on generous budget increases made on his watch. To meet the promise, GOP leaders initially pressed for about \$35 billion in cuts in a proposal that took account of the fact that the budget year is almost halfway over. That idea didn't sell with tea party activists, and Boehner was forced to almost double the size of the cuts, driving away any potential Democratic support. But that means that the halfway point between the House-passed measure and a proposal advanced by Democrats controlling the Senate is roughly where Boehner started out in the first place. Democrats are also pressing to use savings from nonappropriated accounts like farm subsidies to replace cuts made from agency operating budgets, a move that Republicans are resisting. Perhaps even more difficult than a solution on spending is the question of numerous policy provisions, known as "riders," that lace the GOP budget proposal. Democrats adamantly oppose GOP provisions that seek to block implementation of Obama's health care law and cut Planned Parenthood from federal funding. The not-so-subtle tradeoff would be for Republicans to drop their most controversial riders in exchange for more give from Democrats on spending cuts. Getting to that point promises to be political torture for Boehner, and his aides insist that any final agreement will have to include some riders or it can't pass the House. "I think if Boehner and Obama could sit down, they could probably cut a deal pretty quickly, but I think Boehner's got too many cats to herd in order to go where he has to go," said Democratic budget expert Scott Lilly of the liberal-leaning Center for American Progress. "There's a lot of turmoil that needs to take place before this straightens itself out." The vehicle for the debate is must-do legislation to fund the day-to-day operating budgets of federal agencies - including military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan - through the Sept. 30 end of the budget year. Last month, House Republicans passed a measure cutting more than \$60 billion from the \$1.1 trillion budgeted for such programs last year. All the savings was taken from domestic programs and foreign aid, which make up about half of the pot. Democrats in the Senate killed the measure as too extreme, citing cuts to education, health research, food inspection and other programs and services. The legislation was supposed to have been approved last year, but the Democratic-controlled Congress failed to pass a budget. After the elections that swept Republicans into control of the House, Republicans blocked a last-ditch effort to pass a catchall spending bill in December's lame-duck session. Other controversial policy prescriptions would block the Environmental Protection Agency from carrying out regulations on greenhouse gases and implementing a plan to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, and bar the government from shutting down mountaintop mines it believes will cause too much water pollution.

March 29, 2011

South Carolina legislators have approved a bill allowing health insurance companies to cover abortions only if people pay a separate premium for them. The House approved the measure 69-41. Republican Rep. Greg Delleney, of Chester, said it's about protecting the sanctity of life. The bill would also protect the jobs of doctors who refuse to conduct procedures because of their personal beliefs. The expanded state law would cover things such as stem cell research. Democrats said the separate premium idea is preposterous. They said women won't know ahead of time whether they'll be confronted with such a decision, especially in cases of rape. Opponents said if the separate premium becomes law, insurers likely won't offer coverage -- and even if they did, women would be unlikely to ask for it.

March 30, 2011

Organizers said a Republican presidential candidates' debate planned in California has been postponed for lack of participation, making South Carolina's debate in May the first of the 2012 contest. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation said Wednesday that too few candidates had committed to a May 2 debate held along with NBC News and Politico. The event is being shifted to Sept. 14. Many Republican contenders have yet to formally commit to enter the presidential race. Some potential candidates have said they will not reveal decisions before this summer. South Carolina GOP executive director Joel Sawyer said candidates have informally committed to the FOX News debate planned for Greenville on May 5. He said there are no plans to delay that event.

March 30, 2011

A federal judge has thrown out a lawsuit by Republicans who wanted to challenge South Carolina laws that allow citizens to vote in any primary without being a member of that political party. U.S. District Judge Michelle Childs ruled Wednesday that if Republicans don't like open primaries, they have other methods to choose their nominees, like state conventions or petitions. The GOP argued 25 other states require voters to register with a party before a primary. Republicans say open primaries allow party outsiders too much power. A group of independent voters, tea party members and black lawmakers joined the state in fighting the lawsuit. IndependentVoting.org lawyer Harry Kresky said the ruling is great for all South Carolina voters because primaries are often the decisive elections in this very Republican state.

March 31, 2011

On Thursday, former Greenville County Councilman Tony Trout was found guilty of jury tampering, but not guilty of misconduct in office. Trout has already served time in federal prison after being found guilty in April 2009 of computer spying. The latest trial, which started Monday, was for state charges. On Tuesday, Greenville County Administrator Joseph Kernell and three computer experts testified. In 2009, Trout was convicted of using spyware to intercept Kernell's emails. On Wednesday, Trout took the stand in his own defense. He said he was only trying to expose government corruption. "Accident happen, I understand that," Trout testified. "Some of these things here might have been their fault, but for what they were making, and what they were making in payback is nothing, no less than extortion." Trout was sentenced to six months in prison. "This case involved a very important principle, and that is the sanctity of the jury system," said Creighton Waters, senior assistant attorney general. "Juries need to be able to make their decisions without outside influence. It was too important for us to let this case go." Waters said the Attorney General's Office is pleased with the sentence.

March 31, 2011

South Carolina's Republican chief wants the national party to pull its 2012 convention from Florida if that state cuts the presidential primary voting line. South Carolina GOP Chairwoman Karen Floyd said Thursday she has sent RNC members letters calling for Tampa to lose the 2012 convention if Florida breaks the party's order for states to choose a nominee. Traditionally, Iowa goes first, followed by New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada. Other states risk losing delegates to the national convention if they jump in front. A 2007 Florida law sets its primary for the last Tuesday in January, or Jan. 31, 2012. That would displace South Carolina's status as the first-in-the-South primary state. "It sets a precedent that is poor, and we as Republicans follow rules," Floyd told FOX Carolina. "You don't take a convention opportunity that is honoring and allow a state that is violating rules to an honored site." South Carolina officials brag that no GOP nominee has been minted without first winning the contest in their state.

Attachments



Jobs, Economy, Growth

**ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
FIRST QUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **JOBS/ECONOMY/GROWTH**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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January 4, 2011

Unemployment rates rose in more than two-thirds of the nation's largest metro areas in November, a sharp reversal from the previous month and the most since June. The Labor Department said Tuesday that unemployment rates rose in 258 of the 372 largest cities, fell in 88 and remained the same in 26. That's worse than the previous month, when rates fell in 200 areas and rose in 108. The economy is strengthening, but employers have been reluctant to create jobs. Hiring will pick up in 2011, but not enough to significantly lower the unemployment rate, economists forecast. Metro areas in states with the weakest housing markets, such as California, Nevada, Florida and Georgia, are seeing ongoing increases in unemployment. Las Vegas, Atlanta, San Francisco and Miami all saw their rates rise. Construction jobs haven't returned. Real estate agents and mortgage [broker](#) positions have also disappeared. "The areas really affected by the housing bust have yet to come back," said Jim Diffley, a regional economist at IHS Global Insight. Nationwide, the unemployment rate rose in November to 9.8 percent from 9.6 percent the previous month, according to a report last month from the Labor Department. The metro data lags behind the national data by several weeks. Unlike the national report, the metro figures aren't seasonally adjusted to [account](#) for trends such as the hiring of agricultural workers for fall harvests, or the layoff of temporary retail employees after the winter holidays. That makes the data more volatile from month to month. In some hard-hit areas, many laid-off workers are giving up searches. Fourteen metro areas in Michigan reported lower unemployment rates - six of which were among the 10 sharpest drops in November. That included Detroit, where the rate fell to 12 percent from 13.3 percent. But thirteen of them also said that fewer people are employed or looking for work. Once the unemployed stop hunting for jobs, the government no longer counts them as unemployed. Detroit's work force dropped by 36,500 in November, or 1.7 percent. Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Flint and Lansing all saw smaller drops. "That is not a good sign," said Sophia Koropecyk, managing director for Moody's Analytics. "It means that people are giving up and could be leaving the state." Bismarck, N.D. recorded the lowest unemployment rate, with 3.3 percent, followed by Fargo, N.D. and Lincoln, Neb. at 3.5 percent each. El Centro, Calif. had the highest unemployment rate in the nation, at 29.1 percent, followed by Yuma, Ariz., with 24.8 percent. The two areas are adjacent and have large numbers of migrant farm workers.

January 24, 2011

GREENVILLE, S.C. -- Federal regulators shut down two western Carolina banks that the agency said were failing. The FDIC said The Bank of Asheville and Community South Bank And Trust in Easley were closed over the weekend. Regulators said the Asheville bank had \$195 million in assets that will be taken over by First Bank in Troy, N.C. The assets of the Easley bank will be taken over by Certus Bank, another Easley bank. "We want to get back to [business](#) as usual, so there are no interruptions for our customers," said Angela Webb, of Certus Bank. "We want to make sure that our customers are very confident to remain customers with us. That is absolutely important to us. If they have questions, we invite them to come to the branches and meet with us." "Right now, as a result of Friday or this weekend, there is absolutely no disruption in services," said Edith Gray, of the FDIC. Customers with questions about the shutdowns are asked to call the FDIC at 200-405-8124

January 25, 2011

Unemployment rates in both South Carolina and North Carolina were up slightly in December. South Carolina's jobless rate edged up to 10.7 percent from 10.6 percent in November, the Department of Employment and Workforce said Tuesday. Total employment increased by nearly 4,400 last month, but it wasn't enough to drop the jobless rate. Most of the increase came in retail, education and health, and professional and [business services](#). The biggest drops came in tourism-related businesses. Marion County had the highest unemployment rate in December at 19.7 percent. Lexington County had the lowest rate at 8 percent. North Carolina's Employment Security Commission reported Monday the unemployment rate edged up to 9.8 percent in December from 9.7 percent in November. The agency also reported the number of people employed in North Carolina fell by 2,100 in December. The construction [industry](#) dropped nearly 4,000 jobs in the month after adjusting for seasonal differences. The number of people unemployed and looking for work rose by nearly 4,400. The number of people drawing

paychecks and the number of unemployed had been moving in positive directions since this time last year. The national unemployment rate in December was 9.4 percent.


January 25, 2011

A plastics company plans to create 75 jobs when it opens a plant in Oconee County. The South Carolina Commerce Department said Tuesday that Altera Polymers LLC is spending \$4 million on the plant in Seneca. The plastics made at the plant can be used in [consumer products](#), food packaging and industrial products. Some of the material used will come from recycled plastic. The city of Seneca is providing the building. The company expects to begin hiring in a few months.

February 7, 2011

Gas prices crept up in the Greenville area over the past week, according to GasBuddy.com. The gasoline price-tracking website said Monday that the average cost for a gallon of [fuel](#) in Greenville was at \$2.88, up 4.7 cents from the previous week. Greenville still fairs better than the national average of \$3.11 per gallon, which is up 2.9 cents in the past week, according to the website. GasBuddy.com said that Greenville's gasoline is 38.2 cents higher than the same time last year and up a half-cent from last month. The national average is up 5.1 cents from last month and 45.4 cents from last year.

February 15, 2011

A personnel firm is holding a job fair for those looking for positions at BMW Manufacturing Co.'s [South Carolina](#)  plant. MAU [Workforce](#) Solutions is holding the job fair on Tuesday at McAlister Square in Greenville. The company is looking for production associates and forklift operators at the plant near Greer. The majority of the openings are for night shift work. For more information about the jobs visit mau.com/bmwjobs.


February 15, 2011

Global food prices have hit "dangerous levels" that could contribute to political instability, push millions of people into poverty and raise the cost of groceries, according to a new report from the World [Bank](#). The bank released a report Tuesday that said global food prices have jumped 29 percent in the past year, and are just 3 percent below the all-time peak hit in 2008. Bank President Robert Zoellick said the rising prices have hit people hardest in the developing world because they spend as much as half their income on food. "Food prices are the key and major challenge facing many developing countries today," Zoellick said. The World Bank estimates higher prices for corn, wheat and oil have pushed 44 million people into extreme poverty since last June. The report comes a day before Finance ministers and central bank chiefs from the Group of 20 leading economies meet in Paris. Zoellick said he's worried some countries might react to food inflation by banning exports or implementing price controls, which would just aggravate the problem. The World Bank's food price index rose by 15 percent between October and January alone. The increase has been driven by volatile global [trading](#) in wheat, corn and soybeans. Global corn futures more than doubled since this summer, from \$3.50 to \$7 a bushel, in part because of higher demand from developing countries and a growing biofuels industry. Prices are rising in part because global grain traders have gotten jittery about historically low reserve levels of corn, wheat and soybeans, said Chris Nagel, an analyst with Northstar Commodity in Minneapolis. Growing demand from customers in China and elsewhere is putting pressure on the supply of most commodities, he said. The U.S. Department of Agriculture predicted last week U.S. corn farmers will have just 675 million bushels of corn at the end of August, before next year's harvest begins. That's just an 18-day supply, Nagel said. The slim reserves mean traders will likely bid up crop prices further at any weather event that reduces next year's planting. "We need to get good crops, all around the world, in all of these commodities," Nagel said. "You just don't have much foot room for error. The global price of fats and oils rose 22 percent and wheat rose 20 percent between October and January, according to the World Bank. The prices of sugar rose by 20 percent in that time. Industrialized nations like the United States are insulated from the price increases because raw ingredients account for just a fraction of the total food costs. But in many developing counties, prices get transmitted more drastically. Between June and December, wheat prices climbed 54 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 45 percent in Bangladesh and 16 percent in Pakistan, for example. Zoellick warned that higher prices could stoke political instability in countries like Egypt and Tunisia. Both countries are big wheat importers and higher grain costs could aggravate social unrest as the countries form new regimes, he said. "That's where the international system needs to try to be aware of these issues, and try to do things at a minimum not to exacerbate food prices," he said

February 18, 2011

Carowinds is preparing to hire 2,100 [employees](#) as the theme park on the North Carolina-South Carolina state line prepares for its 39th season. The Herald of Rock Hill reported the theme park plans to hold a job fair at the park Saturday. Those seeking to work at the park must have filled out an online application. Carowinds is hiring [workers](#) for food and beverages, rides, games, merchandise, admissions, marketing, aquatics, security, warehouse, and guest services. Carowinds opens for the year on April 2.


February 21, 2011

Home sales are starting to pick up in some of the parts of [South Carolina](#)  hardest hit by the real estate bust, such as the once-overheated coastal market. At the same time, prices are slowly and steadily rising in other housing markets that never spiked in the first place. Cities like Aiken and Columbia saw 2010 prices return to 2006 levels. In the Pee Dee and Sumter areas, last year's median sales prices had shown an increase of 5 percent for the same period. The small city of Greenwood is an ideal example of a steady [housing market](#): There was no run-up in prices during the real estate boom, so there was no bubble to burst when sales dried up. Total sales in the last three years dropped by half, but the median price increased 9 percent from 2006.

February 25, 2011

Deeper spending cuts by state and local governments weighed down U.S. economic growth in the final three months of last year. The government's revised estimate for the October-December quarter illustrates how growing state budget crises could hold back the economic recovery. The Commerce Department reported Friday that economic growth increased at an annual rate of 2.8 percent in the final quarter of last year. That was down from the initial estimate of 3.2 percent. State and local governments, wrestling with budget shortfalls, cut spending at a 2.4 percent pace. That was much deeper than the 0.9 percent annualized cut first estimated and was the most since the start of 2010. Consumers spent a little less than first thought. Their spending rose at a rate of 4.1 percent, slightly smaller than the initial estimate of 4.4 percent. Still, it was the best showing since 2006. And it suggests Americans will play a larger role this year in helping the economy grow, especially with more money from a Social Security tax cut. Overall economic growth in the October-December quarter was marginally better than the 2.6 percent pace logged in the prior quarter. But it shows the economy steadily growing after hitting a difficult patch last spring. For all of last year, the economy grew 2.8 percent, the most in five years, according to revised figures. That was down a bit from the 2.9 percent growth first estimated a month ago. However, it was an improvement from 2009 when the economy suffered its worst decline in more than 60 years. Still, economic growth must be stronger to make a noticeable dent in unemployment, which was 9 percent last month. The economy would need to grow 5 percent for a whole year to significantly bring down the unemployment rate. Economic growth of just 3 percent a year would hold the unemployment steady and keep up with population growth. Looking ahead the economy is expected to grow by 3.2 percent this year, according to an AP Economy Survey. One of the crucial questions is whether consumers can spend enough this year to help offset negative forces in the economy - notably struggling state and local governments and a wobbly housing market that has depressed [homes](#) values. Rising energy prices also pose a danger. If oil prices were to rise to \$150 or more a barrel and then stay there for months, another recession is possible, economists said. Gasoline prices would near \$5 a gallon. Consumers and [businesses](#) would spend much less, and some employers might slash jobs.

February 24, 2011

The [South Carolina](#)  National Guard will start work this spring on a facility to base 10 helicopters in Greenville County. The State newspaper reported construction is to start within two months on the \$26 million facility at the Donaldson Center. The plan will move 45 jobs from McEntire Joint National Guard Base in Eastover to Greenville County. Thirty new jobs also will be added in Greenville. About 190 part-time soldiers will use the center as their training base. Maj. Gen. Les Eiser says the move will allow a more efficient response to disasters and emergencies in the Upstate. Construction is expected to take about a year and a half.

March 8, 2011

One of South Carolina's top budget writers said Gov. Nikki Haley's plans to limit benefits to state workers would be hard to implement. Haley said last week the state's [pension](#) system has a \$14 billion gap in cash on hand and future benefit promises. She said it would cost \$100 million in the current budget to keep up. [House](#) Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Cooper said Tuesday the cost is \$32 million. He said that can be handled by employees and state agencies paying more. The Republican Cooper said state Supreme Court rulings bar benefit changes for state workers who have vested in the system after five years of service. Changes can be made for new and future workers. Haley is to talk with state retirees later Tuesday.

March 10, 2011

A Greenville company's expansion will create 78 jobs over the next five years, according to the South Carolina [Department of Commerce](#) and the Greenville Area Development Corporation. Automation Engineering Corporation said it plans to invest \$6.1 million in its existing Greenville County operations. "We are pleased to move forward with our plans to grow in Greenville," said Gary Foster, the company's president and general manager. "This expansion will allow us to grow our market share while continuing to offer top-notch service to our existing customers." Automation Engineering Corporation designs, builds and integrates custom equipment and factory automation solutions. Hiring for the new positions will begin in May. For more information on the new jobs, visit TeamAEC.com/employment-opportunities.

March 10, 2011

South Carolina's jobless rate improved significantly in January, dropping to 10.5 percent from a revised rate of 10.9 percent in December. The state unemployment rate released Thursday was still significantly higher than the national rate that was 9 percent in January. But the state Department of Employment and Workforce said the improvement in the South Carolina rate followed the national trend. South Carolina's rate had gone up in December. The January rate is significantly lower than a year ago when unemployment in the state reached a post-Depression high of 12.5 percent. Marion County continued to have the highest jobless rate at 21 percent. Lexington County remained the low spot in the state at 7.4 percent.

March 11, 2011

Southwest Airlines lands in South Carolina this weekend, with new flights serving both Charleston and Greenville-Spartanburg. The arrival of the low-fare carrier is expected to save travelers tens of millions on airfare and could mean hundreds of thousands more people flying to the state. Tourism officials in both areas anticipate convention business will increase as it becomes less expensive for businesses to hold meetings in South Carolina. And they say air fares on other carriers typically drop when Southwest enters a market. Southwest employees arrive Saturday, with the first flights out of South Carolina on Sunday. Southwest is flying to Baltimore-Washington, Chicago, Nashville and Houston from both Charleston and Greenville-Spartanburg. The carrier also has flights to Orlando from Greenville-Spartanburg.

March 15, 2011

Volvo said Tuesday that it will relocate its North American sales headquarters in Asheville to Pennsylvania this year. The company said the move is part of a \$100 million investment in its North American operations, including a new building on its campus in Shippensburg, Pa., to house its regional sales headquarters, Volvo Rents offices and training center. Volvo said that all 220 employees at the Asheville location will be given the opportunity to move to Shippensburg. The company said it is putting in place an extensive human resources plan to assist workers who cannot move. The company said the move will further improve the competitiveness and profitability of the business.

March 28, 2011

The Fort Mill-based company whose name is synonymous with elevator music has been sold to a Canadian firm. Toronto-based Mood Media said last week it is paying \$345 million for the privately held Muzak. Mood Media said the combined company's U.S. headquarters will remain in Fort Mill, where it relocated in 1999. The deal was first reported by The Charlotte Observer. Muzak successfully emerged from bankruptcy last year after restructuring its debt. The company still owed more than \$200 million, but company officials said that will be paid off when the deal closes in the second quarter. Founded in 1934, Muzak became famous playing records for restaurants and hotels. It now provides music to its subscribers over satellite radio, but will switch to an Internet-based delivery system after the deal.

March 28, 2011

The average price for a gallon of gas in the Greenville area increased nearly 4 cents last week, which is higher than the national average. GasBuddy.com reported that gas prices rose 3.6 cents in Greenville, which is slightly higher than the national average increase of 3.4 cents. However, Greenville drivers are paying \$3.36 on average at the pump, but the national average price is \$3.56 per gallon. The website said Greenville's prices are 16 cents higher than last month and 78.8 cents higher than last year.

AAA Carolinas reported the average price for a gallon of regular unleaded was \$3.41 in South Carolina, \$3.54 in North Carolina and \$3.47 in Georgia.

March 29, 2011

A pharmaceutical company in Greenville County said Tuesday it will create 15 jobs with an investment of \$8.5 million. Pharmaceutical Associates said it will expand its existing operations at the South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center by the first quarter of 2012. "We are pleased to continue to grow our operations in Greenville County, and this investment will allow us to meet growing demand from our customers across the U.S.," said Clete Harmon, senior vice president of regulatory and business affairs for PAI. The company said it will expand its 340,000-square-foot facilities by 40,000 square feet. PAI makes liquid pharmaceuticals. It also has formulated, manufactured and packaged thousands of products, including a proprietary line of generic pharmaceutical liquids. People interested in PAI's job openings should visit paipharma.com.

March 31, 2011

personnel firm said it is moving its recruiting for positions at BMW Manufacturing Co.'s South Carolina plant to a website. MAU Workforce Solutions said in a news release Thursday that people can apply online for a position and schedule an interview that will be conducted at MAU's Greenville office. The company says the online registration means an end to having applicants stand in long lines or attend job fairs to get an interview. For people without access to a computer, BMW will hold a virtual job fair at the McAlister Square One-Stop Center on Tuesday. MAU is hiring forklift operators and production associates that pay \$15 to 16 an hour depending on shift. Most of the jobs will be at night.

Attachments



Quality of Life

**ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
FIRSTQUARTER 2011**

Problem/Need: **QUALITY OF LIFE**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
Saturdays	12:30am	WESTGATE FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH
Description:	A church service that airs Saturdays at 12:30am. (30:00)	
Sundays 6:00am		MOUNT MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH
Description:	A church service airing Sunday mornings. (1-hour)	
Sundays,	7:30am	GREG LENTZ MINISTRIES
Description:	A church service that airs every Sunday morning. (30:00)	
Sundays 8:30am		MUD CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
Description:	A church service that airs every Sunday morning. (30:00)	
Sundays 9:30 am		TAYLORS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Description:	A church service that airs every Sunday morning. (30:00)	
Sundays 10:30am		FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Description:	A church service that airs every Sunday morning and Saturday night. (30:00)	

January 4, 2011

One of South Carolina's business giants is being remembered as someone who had an impact on the textile world. A memorial service was held Monday for textile titan Roger Milliken at the Episcopal Church of the Advent in Spartanburg. Milliken took over his family's textile business, Milliken & Co., in 1947 and turned it into an international multibillion-dollar giant that employs 9,000 people in 50 plants. The Upstate mogul was remembered by family, friends and former employees as a builder and innovator. Clay Turner was Milliken's pastor and friend, and he said Milliken was a generous man who saw the potential in everyone. Milliken died Thursday at age 95. The textile tycoon also was influential in the early growth of the state's Republican Party and was a longtime advocate of protecting the environment. He was also instrumental in the creation of the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport.

January 14, 2011

Despite having their first black president, Americans are no more certain than before that the country is closer to the racial equality preached by Martin Luther King Jr., a poll shows. Seventy-seven percent of people interviewed in an AP-GfK poll say there has been significant progress toward King's dream, about the same as the 75 percent who felt that way in 2006, before Obama was elected. Just over one in five, 22 percent, say they feel there has been "no significant progress" toward that dream. "The exuberance and thrill of seeing an African American elected to the presidency has been tempered by the outrageous claims that we've heard about him," said William Jelani Cobb, a history professor at Rutgers University. Real concerns that King fought for remain, even with a black president, he said. "And the violent rhetoric we've seen directed towards (Obama) diminishes the initial sentiment that we've made great progress because of the election," he said. The poll also reveals that more people plan to celebrate Monday's federal holiday honoring King - 30 percent, compared to 23 percent who had such plans five years ago. That includes 46 percent of non-whites, 38 percent of college graduates, 36 percent who live in urban areas and 36 percent who attend religious services at least weekly, according to the poll. Some communities in the South, including around

Atlanta, where schools have been closed because of a snow and ice storm, have decided to make up one of the days on MLK Day, upsetting some African-American groups. In 1994, Congress added community service as a focus of the federal holiday, which marks its 25th anniversary this year. More than one million Americans are expected to participate in 13,000 projects around the country on the King Day of Service, said Patrick Corvington, head of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency charged with administering service projects on the King holiday. "The focus on service has allowed for a different kind of conversation about Dr. King and what he was about," Corvington said. "It allows all people to connect with Dr. King in different ways." The new poll also shows most of the nation in support of the King holiday. Three-quarters of those surveyed this year say King's birthday should be so honored, with 84 percent of non-white respondents believing so, compared to 68 percent of white respondents. Younger adults are also more apt to feel the birthday deserves the honor, as 81 percent among those under 50 years old supported the holiday, compared to 66 percent among those 50 to 64 and 62 percent among seniors. The civil rights icon, who would have turned 82 on Saturday, is the only American who was not a U.S. president honored with a federal holiday. The AP-GfK Poll was conducted January 5-10, 2010 by GfK Roper Public Affairs and Corporate Communications. It involved landline and cell phone interviews with 1,001 adults nationwide, and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.2 percentage points

January 25, 2011

Jim Burry met James Nampushi while on a mission trip in Kenya. "You want to help people, but when you do, you're the one who receives the blessing," Burry said. He said that's when Nampushi talked about the contaminated water in his village. "It was deplorable, what I saw," Burry said. "It was awful and no one should have to drink what they drink." A small pond is the only water supply for the village and it is the same place where animals urinate and defecate. Nampushi said he wanted to get an advanced degree to help his village and Burry told him about Clemson University. "He said it could only be a dream and I told him, I said, 'Well, dream, James!'" Burry said. Nampushi's dream came true. He's from the Massai tribe and to gain honor and respect as a rite of passage, boys attempt to kill lions to become warriors. "Killing a lion is no joke," Nampushi said, as he held a spear in one hand. "This is the spear that I used to kill the lion." Nampushi became a warrior, but not without being attacked by the lion. Over time he healed, but he said the real victory will come when he gets a water well for his village. He said people there walk 12 miles a day for 20 liters of water. "That is not even enough to cook food, let alone take a shower or wash your face," Nampushi said. Burry, along with church members from Fountain Inn's Infinity Church and friends, met at the Coach House restaurant in Simpsonville Monday night. The group met with a representative of a nonprofit organization called Living Water International, which digs wells in countries all over the world. They're trying to raise money to build the well. "I have faith because God did the miracle for me to be in Clemson, and now the same God will do a miracle for the Massai village," Nampushi said. People who would like to donate to Nampushi's cause can visit infinity-church.org.

January 28, 2011

On Sunday, when the 911 call came in, like many times before, Spartanburg Public [Safety](#) Officer Scott Eckhardt responded. Eckhardt said initially, he didn't know what the call at the Prince Hall apartment complex was about, only that someone needed help. "When I arrived on scene, I'd actually met with a young gentleman who told me 'Help! I need help!'" Eckhardt said. The man ran out of an apartment and told Eckhardt that his 1-month-old son was not breathing. "He's wasn't breathing, and his eyes were kind of rolled back a little, in his head," Eckhardt said. "I couldn't locate anything in his mouth, so what I did is I turned him upside down and laid his body faced down across my forearm and I had his head in my hand. Eckhardt said the boy had started turning blue and his body was going limp. "I just applied some pressure to his back and was finally able to get whatever it was dislodged, and I could hear him take a deep breath," Eckhardt said. "He actually started breathing normally, yawned really big and started to go to sleep. So, I think whatever trauma he'd been through was enough for the day and he decided it was nap time." In that moment, out of all the sights and sounds Eckhardt has seen and heard, the sound of the baby gasping for air, he said, was the most precious. The baby was also treated by an ambulance crew and is expected to be all right. Eckhardt, who is being hailed a hero by some, said he was just doing his job.

January 28, 2011

Dorman High School student Logan Hall may soon be known around the world after she won a record contract with Jive Records. The 16-year-old Roebuck girl won a nationwide talent contest, where she had to show the three judges that she could out-sing, out-act and out-perform tens of thousands of competitors during the online show, "Talent: The Casting Call." "It's kind of hard to explain my excitement," Hall said. "I will get to record an album, and that is what I've always wanted to do." Hall's victory means she is automatically signed to the Jive Records label, a worldwide company that makes records for some

of the biggest stars in music, including Britney Spears, Alicia Keys and Justin Timberlake. Hall is also signed to have the lead role in a television show called "Talent" and her own reality show called "The Logan Diaries."
January 31, 2011

A dispute over leadership at a Henderson County church has turned from angry words to fist fights. About 30 police officers from five agencies were called to break up fights Sunday at Greater New Zion Baptist Church in Fletcher. Henderson County Sheriff's Capt. Jerry Rice said the brawl is under investigation, and no one appears to have been seriously hurt. Rice said there were about 75 people at the church when police arrived, but not all of them were scuffling. Church members are divided over the recent ouster of the Rev. LeVon Ray as pastor of the church. The fighting apparently began over whether a vote should be held to reinstate Ray. No charges have been filed.

February 9, 2011

High energy prices, high unemployment and a cold winter are prompting a record number of households to seek home heating assistance. The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association will announce Wednesday that 8.9 million households are expected to qualify for financial help this winter, up from 8.3 million last winter. It's the third year in a row the number of households needing assistance has set a new high. The chief reason is the economy, according to Mark Wolfe, Executive Director of NEADA. "We have this group who weren't poor before the recession, who are poor now and scrambling for whatever they can get," Wolfe says. "It's a tough situation." Congress doubled funding for the program, called Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, to \$5.1 billion two years ago and matched that level last year. Congressional Republicans are expected to try to pare that back during budget negotiations next week. Three House Democrats, Edward Markey of Massachusetts, Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut and Gene Green of Texas are expected to call for maintaining the \$5.1 billion level at a press conference scheduled for Wednesday. "In the middle of such a harsh winter, where heating bills have piled up along with the snow, we can't leave our nation's low-income families out in the cold by cutting this energy assistance program," said Rep. Markey, the top Democrat in the House Natural Resources Committee in a statement Tuesday. He criticized Republicans for defending tax breaks given to oil and gas companies, while putting "heating fuel assistance for America's neediest on the chopping block." So far this winter, LIHEAP has been allocated \$4.1 billion. Wolfe says that with the additional \$1 billion, the program will cover 46 percent of the average recipient's annual bill. Without it, just 42 percent of the average bill will be covered and about one million fewer households will be served. Cold weather throughout much of the country has forced homeowners to keep the heat cranked up, and prices of some fuels rose sharply. The average cost for a recipient to heat their home with heating oil has reached a record \$2,291 this season, according to NEADA. Heating oil prices were pushed higher by crude oil prices that rose steadily throughout the fall. Propane also reached a record high. But electricity costs fell below last year's high. And natural gas, which is used by three-fourths of the households served, increased only slightly and remains cheaper than in recent winters. Households receiving assistance are paying \$753 per year to heat their homes with natural gas this year, down from \$866 in the winter of 2008-2009. NEADA says some states are projecting an increase of at least 15 percent in the number of eligible applications for assistance. Among the states anticipating the biggest jump include Vermont (64), Florida (50%), Massachusetts (21%), Wyoming (20%), Louisiana (20%), Texas (17%), and Mississippi (15%). Applications are projected to fall in two states, Georgia and Delaware.

February 14, 2011

A fire destroyed two townhomes and damaged a third in Greer on Monday afternoon. The fire happened at the Sugar Creek Villas off Tanager Road just before 5 p.m. Officials said the fire spread quickly because of gusty winds. Multiple fire departments were at the scene. Officials said no one was hurt. The American Red Cross said three families were displaced by the blaze and require the charity's assistance. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

February 15, 2011

President Barack Obama recognized a former president, a basketball legend and a civil rights hero Tuesday among the 15 recipients of the Medal of Freedom. During a ceremony at the White House, Obama said the recipients represent, "the best of who we are and who we aspire to be." The Medal of Freedom is the nation's highest civilian honor, and is presented to people who have made important contributions to U.S. national security, world peace, culture or other significant public or private endeavors. Among the recipients honored Tuesday were former President George H.W. Bush, former basketball star Bill Russell, businessman Warren Buffett and civil rights activist Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga. Obama praised Bush for his more than 70 years of service to his country, saying his life is a testament to the belief that public service is a noble calling. "His humility

and his decency reflects the very best of the American spirit," Obama said. The 2010 Medal of Honor recipients were announced in November. Other winners include: - Angela Merkel, German Chancellor - John H. Adams, co-founder of Natural Resources Defense Council - Maya Angelou, poet and author - Jasper Johns, artist - Gerda Weissmann Klein, Holocaust survivor and author - Dr. Tom Little (posthumous), optometrist murdered on humanitarian mission in Afghanistan - Sylvia Mendez, civil rights activist of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent - Stan Musial, Hall of Fame baseball player - Bill Russell, professional basketball player and first African American to coach in the NBA - Jean Kennedy Smith, founder of VSA, a non-profit organization that promotes the artistic talents of people with disabilities - John J. Sweeney, President Emeritus of the AFL-CIO.

February 15, 2011

The two Bi-Lo Center workers who are credited with saving the life of a newborn found in a toilet at the arena were honored by Greenville leaders Monday night. Eder Serrano and Marco Calle were recognized by the Greenville City Council, Mayor Knox White and Police Chief Terri Wilfong. The men were part of a cleaning crew that found the baby up to his neck in water in the women's bathroom. "(I) thank God for giving me the chance to save the baby," Calle said. "I'm happy for this, but I'm more happy the baby is now OK." The men were given trophies and received a standing ovation. The baby's mother, Jessica Blackham, has been released from jail on bond after being charged with two counts of felony child abuse and one count of unlawful neglect of a child. Investigators said they are awaiting DNA tests results before proceeding with the case.

February 18, 2011

Civic groups in Catawba County are expanding a Hickory playground in memory of Zahra Baker, a 10-year-old girl whose dismembered remains were found in western North Carolina last year. The Hickory Daily Record reported that Kiwanis clubs of Catawba County say the \$85,000 addition could be open by July. The new play equipment is for children with disabilities. Bone cancer had left Zahra with a prosthetic leg and hearing aids. No one has been charged in her death. The town of Hickory is assisting in the project to add a tunnel, climbing wall and other wheelchair-accessible features to the park. The Zahra Baker All Children's Playground will include a bronze plaque saying, "Zahra, you touched us. 1999-2010," along with her photo.

March 8, 2011

A memorial service is being held at an air base in England for an American airman killed in last week's attack at an airport in Germany. The Independent-Mail of Anderson reported the service for Senior Airman Nick Alden is scheduled Thursday. The service will be held at Lakenheath Airfield in England, where the 25-year-old was stationed. The former Williamston resident was one of two airmen killed when a gunman started shooting at a bus carrying U.S. military servicemen at the airport in Frankfurt. Alden was in Germany training for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. Cathy Garner, Alden's mother, told the newspaper that his funeral will be held next week in South Carolina.

March 9, 2011

Set in the pages of April's issue of Men's Journal is a city that's making headlines -- Greenville, one of the 18 coolest towns in America. "Greenville has grown quite a bit," said Joshua Jones, a Greenville resident. "I've been here since '89 and it was a very different place, but there's so much here that people don't expect." Jones said Greenville is a great place to live. "It's turned into an absolutely gorgeous place," Jones said. "Anybody that comes here can see it for themselves." Greenville makes the list along with other well-known cities like New Orleans and Memphis. "I think it's a great economic hub, as well," said Andrea Smith, another Greenville resident. "We've got a lot of great business going on with ICAR here and international businesses coming here. I think it makes Greenville unique." The article also boasts Greenville's downtown, which includes the Liberty Bridge in Falls Park and a free trolley service. "The thing about this article, I think, is it really kind of defines the cool factor that we have here in Greenville," said Ben Haskew, president of the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. "(We have a) great downtown, (a) downtown baseball park, walking trails, a lot of cycling here, including professional cycling." Haskew said not only does the article give Greenville more exposure, but also it could attract new faces and businesses to the area.

March 10, 2011

Military officials said a soldier from South Carolina has been killed in Afghanistan. The Department of Defense announced Wednesday that 19-year-old Pfc. Kalin C. Johnson of Lexington died March 8 in Kandahar province of injuries suffered in a non-combat accident. Johnson was assigned to the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck, Germany.

March 10, 2011

Memorial services for two airman killed during a shooting in Germany last week will be held in Germany and England on Thursday and Friday. Prosecutors said Airman 1st Class Zachary R. Cuddeback, of Illinois, and Senior Airman Nick Alden, of South Carolina, were shot and killed March 2 by a 21-year-old Kosovo Albanian who wanted to kill Americans in revenge for the Afghanistan mission. Germany-based Cuddeback was the driver of the bus that was to take 15 England-based airmen to Ramstein Air Base for deployment to Afghanistan. After Thursday's service in Ramstein, a memorial is scheduled Friday at Lakenheath Airfield in England, where Alden was based. Funerals for both will be held later in the U.S.

March 28, 2011

In January, Buncombe County participated in the national Point-In-Time Count, where homeless people, in shelters and on the streets, were counted. The survey found that the number of homeless people and those who are chronically homeless is down. Some said the report does not mean the problem is solved. On Sunday, a purple flag waved outside the First Baptist Church of Black Mountain, which meant its shelter was open because of the cold weather. Residents of Black Mountain said they have seen homelessness as a growing problem. They said this winter they opened their first shelter to meet some of the need. The volunteer-supported shelter has served between three and 13 homeless people on cold nights. People can stay from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m., and they get a hot dinner, breakfast and a sandwich to take with them for lunch. Residents said they jumped into action after four homeless people in the area died last year because of the freezing weather. "There is definitely a need," said Renae Brame, director of the Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry. "We get calls at the ministry all the time from homeless people, saying can we please put them up in a motel, (and that) they need a shower and need a warm place to be." The last day that this Black Mountain shelter will be open is Thursday. Since this is its first year in operation, the church community only has the resources to open from Nov. 1 to March 31. The Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry will continue to help on an individual basis. For information more information, visit svcministry.org.

March 28, 2011

A Greenville Wal-Mart employee claimed his \$400,000 prize after winning Thursday's Palmetto Cash 5 drawing. Lucien Bergeron said he called the South Carolina Education Lottery twice to confirm that he had won, but he said the win didn't stop him and his girlfriend from a trip to a casino in Cherokee. "I knew the \$400,000 would be waiting for me when we got back," Bergeron told lottery officials. "So we didn't cancel our plans." "We weren't quite so lucky in Cherokee," said Bergeron's girlfriend, whose name was not released. "That's what we came today to get the money." Bergeron matched 1, 4, 8, 20 and 31 during Thursday's drawing. He also bought the Power-Up option that multiplied his winnings to \$400,000. The big winner said he does not plan to quit his job but does plan to pay off his house. He said he might also buy a car. The odds of winning the top prize in the Palmetto Cash 5 drawing are 1 in 501,942. The winning ticket was purchased at the Garden Spot Food Store in Greenville.

March 29, 2011

A 60-year-old Anderson woman has become the first patient to receive a lung transplant in South Carolina in 14 years. The Post and Courier of Charleston reports Evin Evans received new lungs in an operation at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston on March 9. It was the first lung transplant performed at MUSC since 1997 when the university suspended its transplant program after its main surgeon left. Evans is a goat farmer and doctors said her lungs likely failed because of exposure to the goats. Until the transplant program was reinstated, South Carolina was one of only a few states without a lung transplant program.